



LIVING AS FORM

SOCIALLY ENGAGED ART FROM 1991–2011

EDITED BY NATO THOMPSON

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FOREWORD

Over twenty years ago, artist Peggy Diggs sat in a Western Massachusetts prison and listened as women recounted the abuses they had suffered at the hands of their spouses. She learned that these women were often prisoners in their own homes, unable to tell their stories or get assistance. Many only left their house to conduct basic household errands, such as grocery shopping. Diggs saw an opportunity to help. She enlisted Tuscan Dairy Farms to print a question—"When you argue at home, does it always get out of hand?"—and an abuse hotline number on over one million milk cartons distributed in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. She believed that this message was worth hearing, and that the supermarket was the right forum in which to spread it.

I encountered Diggs' *The Domestic Milk Carton Project*, a Creative Time commission, several years before joining the organization, while I was pouring milk into my coffee. At the time, a friend would call frequently with complaints about her abusive fiancée, and I rarely knew what to say. (It took the murder of O.J. Simpson's wife Nicole Brown in 1994 to lift the veil of shame and secrecy around domestic violence.) So, I called the hotline number. I had no idea that I'd just experienced public art; nor did it matter. What did matter was that

the image, and the message, provoked me to pause, think, learn, and act.

For thirty-seven years, Creative Time has been challenging audiences to expand their views while encouraging artists to broaden and deepen their relationships to the pressing issues of our times and the communities they effect. Projects such as Diggs'; Julian LaVerdiere and Paul Myoda's *Tribute in Light* illuminating Lower Manhattan after 9/11; Gran Fury's famed *Kissing Doesn't Kill* billboards about HIV transmission; Paul Chan's *Waiting for Godot* in Post-Katrina New Orleans; Paul Ramírez Jonas' civic artwork *Key to the City*; Sharon Hayes' *Revolutionary Love* addressing the state of queer desire; and Tania Bruguera's *Immigrant Movement International* have upheld Creative Time's historic belief that artists matter in society and that public spaces are places for their free and creative expression.

In recent years, there has been a rapidly growing movement of artists choosing to engage with timely issues by expanding their practice beyond the safe confines of the studio and right into the complexity of the unpredictable public sphere. This work has many names: "relational aesthetics," "social justice art," "social practice," and "community art," among others. These artists engage in a process that

includes careful listening, thoughtful conversation, and community organizing. With antecedents such as the Dada Cabaret Voltaire, Joseph Beuys' notion of Social Sculpture, Allan Kaprow's "happenings," Gordon Matta Clarke's interventions, radical community theater of the 1960s, Lygia Clark's Tropicália movement in Brazil, the community-based public art projects of groundbreaking artists such as Suzanne Lacy, Mierle Laderman Ukeles and Rick Lowe to social movements from the Civil Rights and Feminist Movements to the Green Party, social practice artists create forms of living that activate communities and advance public awareness of pressing social issues. In the process, they expand models of art, advance ways of being an artist, and involve new publics in their efforts.

Despite the growing prevalence of this art practice, and the rise of graduate art programs offering degrees in social practice art, relatively few among the growing masses of art enthusiasts are aware of its existence, let alone its vibrancy. To be fair, this kind of work does not hang well in a museum, and it isn't commercially viable. Furthermore, social practice art has lacked a shared critical language and comprehensive historic documentation. Creative Time's own engagement with the social was often dismissed in an art world that prefers to frame artists as commodity makers rather than change makers, and where many assert that politics and art have no place together. At Creative Time, we have always felt otherwise. So, in 2006 we launched *Who Cares*, a project that brought artists and thinkers together to discuss the role of art and activism. This ultimately led to the creation of The Creative Time Summit, our annual conference on art and social justice, and presentation of The Leonore Annenberg Prize for Art and Social Change.

Living as Form, an exhibition and book that looks at social practice art from around the globe, further extends this legacy. It is, admittedly, a problematic undertaking. After all, how does one present site-specific, community-based work outside of its context? How can a history be written when there are unlimited

and complex social, cultural, economic, political, religious, and class constructs at play? Where does one begin to tell the story? With the manifestos of modern art movements? With the global social protests that ignited the new millennium, or with the impact of microfinancing and small do-it-yourself NGOs in places of need? How does one weave together the diverse narratives of feminist, African-American, and Latino practices that have largely been dismissed as "community art"? How does one deal with differences among local conditions around the world where dictatorial regimes make every act of artistic expression a potential danger that can lead to jail, torture, and even death? (I am reminded in particular of the recent imprisonments and torture of artist Ai Weiwei and the tragic assignation of theater director Juliano Mer-Khamis in the West Bank.) And, perhaps most importantly, what are the ethical implications of this practice?

In light of these questions and the many others surrounding social practice art, Creative Time Chief Curator Nato Thompson took an unusual and difficult path organizing the *Living as Form* project. Rather than attempting an authoritative historical survey or compiling a "best of" list, he conceived of *Living as Form* in order to raise fundamental questions that advance dialogue, ignite conversation, and promote greater understanding of social practice work for the complicated and important field that it is. In this pursuit, Nato turned to twenty-five advising curators, who have guided our understanding of the complexities of the field and exposed us to many new artists working within it. We thank: Caron Atlas, Negar Azimi, Ron Bechet, Claire Bishop, Brett Bloom, Rashida Bumbray, Carolina Caycedo, Ana Paula Cohen, Common Room, Teddy Cruz, Sofía Hernández Chong Cuy, Gridthiya Gaweewong, Hou Hanru, Stephen Hobbs, Marcus Neustetter, Shannon Jackson, Maria Lind, Chus Martínez, Sina Najafi, Marion von Osten, Ted Purves, Raqs Media Collective, Gregory Sholette, SUPERFLEX, Christine Tohme, and Sue Bell Yank.

This book features essays by acclaimed theorists and practitioners Claire Bishop, Teddy

Cruz, Maria Lind, Carol Becker, Shannon Jackson, and Brian Holmes, who each look at the phenomenon of social practice in art from vastly different global, and critical perspectives. Claire Bishop questions the tendency to privilege ethical standards over aesthetic ones, while Brian Holmes provides a four-step process of producing social practice that values both of these standards equally. Carol Becker describes the uniqueness of artist-designed “microutopias” while Maria Lind recounts numerous projects across Europe that demonstrate long-term investment in the messy realities of life outside of the artistic context.

We are deeply grateful to Nato who is a most fervent champion of art and social justice. He is that rare curator and scholar that insists that artists not only create, but also create important change. Research for this project was lead by curatorial fellow Leah Abir, who joined us from Israel thanks to our partnership with Artis, a non-profit that supports Israeli contemporary art around the world.

We applaud Sharmila Venkatasubban, our talented editor who masterfully brought this book to life. It is always a pleasure to work with the designer Garrick Gott, who creates elegant order from chaos. Special thanks goes to our copy editor Clinton Krute and proofreader Ann Holcomb, as well as all the interns and fellows who made this book a reality: Madeline Lieberberg, Winona Packer, Shraddha Borowake, Phillip Griffith, and Rachel Ichniowski.

We cannot say enough just how profoundly grateful we are to the donors who believed in this project and, despite a turbulent global economy, recognized the importance of artists as agents for change and generously invested in this project. Specific funding for *Living as Form* has been provided by the Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Joanne Leonhardt Cassullo, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the Danish Arts Council Committee for Visual Arts, Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Bella Meyer and Martin Kace, the Mondriaan Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Panta Rhea Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund,

the Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture, Emily Glasser and William Susman, and the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund. We give special thanks to the Annenberg Foundation for continued support of The Leonore Annenberg Prize for Art and Social Change, a \$25,000 award that each year acknowledges an artist who has devoted his or her life’s work to promoting social justice.

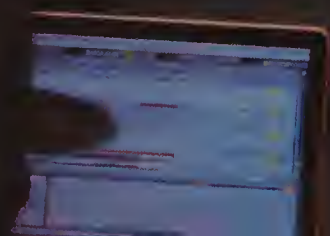
I’m particularly blessed to work with an incredible team. The Creative Time Board supports our every dream and trusts in us to realize them. That trust is essential as it frees artists to follow their instincts—unencumbered by bureaucracy and fear—without which great art cannot happen. The Creative Time staff is devoted to artists and takes exceptional efforts to make magic happen every day.

Above all, we thank the artists who engage in social practice for their inspiration and for daring to make an impact on our world. We hope through their work, this book will inspire further scholarship and action.

Anne Pasternak, President and Artistic Director, Creative Time

CKETS

SNOW
PEACH





ENTRANCE









LIVING AS FORM

NATO THOMPSON

WHAT STRIKES ME IS THE FACT THAT
IN OUR SOCIETY, ART HAS BECOME
SOMETHING WHICH IS RELATED
ONLY TO OBJECTS AND NOT TO
INDIVIDUALS, OR TO LIFE. THAT ART IS
SOMETHING WHICH IS SPECIALIZED OR
WHICH IS DONE BY EXPERTS WHO ARE
ARTISTS. BUT COULDN'T EVERYONE'S
LIFE BECOME A WORK OF ART? WHY
SHOULD THE LAMP OR HOUSE BE AN
OBJECT, BUT NOT OUR LIFE?

— Michel Foucault

I WENT FROM BEING AN ARTIST
WHO MAKES THINGS,
TO BEING AN ARTIST
WHO MAKES THINGS HAPPEN.

— Jeremy Deller

PART I: LIVING AS FORM

Women on Waves is an activist/art organization founded in 2001 by physician Rebecca Gomperts. The small nonprofit group would sail from the coasts of countries where abortion is illegal in a boat designed by Atelier Van Leishout that housed a functioning abortion clinic. Gomperts and her crew would then anchor in international waters—since the boat was registered in The Netherlands, they operated under Dutch law—to provide abortion services to women, legally and safely. The following quote is from a documentary film about the history of Women on Waves. While reading, bear in mind the almost Homeric qualities this seafaring narrative conjures. It is a drama, and this is no accident.

“As the ship sails into the Valencia harbor, conservatives dispatch ships bearing banners reading “no” and drumming thunders from the anti-choice protesters leaning on the gates to the port. The dock is mobbed with supporters and aggressive press. As the ship attempts to tie up, a dissenting harbor patrol ship lodges itself between the Women on Waves ship and the dock, securing their lines to the ship and attempting to drag the ship back to sea, while the activists frantically try to untie the line. The authorities seem to be winning the tug of war, when Rebecca, clearly enjoying the moment, emerges from the hole wielding a large knife. The crowd onshore thunderously stomps and cheers as she slices the patrol’s rope in half, freeing her ship, bows to the crowd, and tosses the Women on Waves lines to the eager supporters. As the harbor patrol’s motorboat circles, baffled and impotent, hundreds of hands pull the ship into dock.”

Seven years later, for his project *Palas Por Pistolas*, the artist Pedro Reyes collected 1,527 weapons from residents of Culiacán, a Western Mexican city known for drug trafficking

and a high rate of fatal gunfire. Working with local television stations, he invited citizens to donate their firearms in exchange for vouchers that could be redeemed for electronics and appliances from domestic shops. The 1,527 weapons—more than forty percent of which were issued by the military—were publicly steamrolled into a mass of flattened metal, melted down in a local foundry, and recast into 1,527 shovels. Reyes distributed the shovels to local charities and school groups, which used them to plant 1,527 trees in public spaces throughout the city. The spades have been widely exhibited, with labels attached explaining their origins; each time they are shown, they are used to plant more trees.

Here we have before us two socially engaged art projects—both poetic, yet functional and political as well. They engage people and confront a specific issue. While these participatory projects are far removed from what one might call the traditional studio arts—such as sculpture, film, painting, and video—what field they *do* belong to is hard to articulate. Though defined by an active engagement with groups of people in the world, their intentions and disciplines remain elusive. Are these projects geared for the media? Each project flourished among news outlets as these artists created new spin around old stories: a woman’s right to choose and the drug wars of Northern Mexico. Women on Waves has performed relatively few abortions over the course of seven years. In fact, the boat has mainly been deployed as a media device intended to bring awareness to the issue. Similarly, Pedro Reyes did remove 1,527 guns from the streets of Culiacán. But, given the actual extent of gun violence there, his gesture seems far more symbolic than practical.

And yet, symbolic gestures can be powerful and effective methods for change. Planting trees does improve quality of life, and using recycled guns to do so speaks directly to those most affected by the violence. Likewise, Women on Waves provided essential services to women in anti-choice countries, regardless of how many were actually able to take advantage of them. While we may not know how to cat-



egorize these projects, they typify a growing array of complex cultural production that continues to garner interest and adherents. Say what one will, socially engaged art is growing and ubiquitous.

The projects in *Living as Form* expose the numerous lines of tension which have surfaced in socially engaged art in the past twenty years, essentially shaking up foundations of art discourse, and sharing techniques and intentions with fields far beyond the arts. Unlike its avant-garde predecessors such as Russian Constructivism, Futurism, Situationism, Tropicalia, Happenings, Fluxus, and Dadaism, socially engaged art is not an art movement. Rather, these cultural practices indicate a new social order—ways of life that emphasize participation, challenge power, and span disciplines ranging from urban planning and community work to theater and the visual arts.

This veritable explosion of work in the arts has been assigned catchphrases, such as “relational aesthetics,” coined by French

curator Nicholas Bourriaud, or Danish curator Lars Bang Larsen’s term, “social aesthetics.” We can also look to artist Suzanne Lacy’s “new genre public art,” or the commonly known West Coast term “social practice.” Other precursors include Critical Art Ensemble’s activist approach called “tactical media” and Grant Kester’s “dialogic art,” which refers to conversation-based projects. We can also go back further to consider Joseph Beuys’s “social sculpture.” Numerous genres have been deeply intertwined in participation, sociality, conversation, and “the civic.” This interconnectivity reveals a peculiar historic moment in which these notions aren’t limited to the world of contemporary art, but includes various cultural phenomena which have cropped up across the urban fabric. For example, spontaneous bike rides in cities by the group Critical Mass, guerrilla community gardens, and micro-granting community groups are just a few of the non-discipline-specific cultural projects which share many of the same criteria



as socially engaged artworks.

How do we write such an interdisciplinary, case-specific narrative without producing misleading causal relationships? The desire to merge art and life resonates throughout the avant-garde movements of the twentieth century and then multiplies across the globe at the beginning of the twenty-first. Artists have borrowed from a plethora of histories—from Russian Constructivists, Fluxus, Gutai, Tropicalia, and Happenings to Antonin Artaud's Theater of Cruelty, Boal's Theater of the Oppressed, and the San Francisco Mime Troupe. However, it would be a mistake not to place within that history the seminal pedagogic social movements of the last one hundred years. This includes AIDS activism, the women's movement, the anti-Apartheid movement, Perestroika, the civil rights movement, Paris '68, the Algerian wars, as well as the many leaders and visionaries within those movements who discussed the importance of sociality, methods of resistance and confronting power, and strategies for using media. History itself is a problem when it leads to a false sense of causality. If we follow the trail of this work strictly through the lens of art (which is what most discipline-specific histories do), we could easily imagine a very Western trajectory moving from Dada to Rirkrit Tiravanija in 1991 making *Pad Thai*—a version of a history in quick strokes. But of course, this kind of highly problematic narrative lacks a true appreciation of the vast complexity of global and local influences, an all-too-common signpost for the contemporary period. Art is no longer the primary influence for culture and because of this, tracing its roots is all the more complex.

Living as Form searches the post-Cold War era, and the dawn of neoliberalism, for cultural works which serve as points of departure for specific regional and historic concerns. However, this book does not offer a singular critical language for evaluating socially engaged art, nor provide a list of best practices, nor offer a linear historic interpretation of a field of practice. Instead, we merely present the temperature in the water in order to raise compelling questions.

WHAT IS MEANT BY LIVING?

Artists have long desired that art enter life. But what do we mean by "life"? In the context of *Living as Form*, the word conjures certain qualities that I wish to explore, an aggregate of related but different manifestations of the term.

Anti-representational

When artist Tania Bruguera states, "I don't want an art that points at a thing, I want an art that *is* the thing," she emphasizes forms of art that involve being in the world. Yet, she has also said, "It is time to put Duchamp's urinal back in the restroom." Duchamp's "Readymades" are a great place to initiate the conversation about art and life. For some artists, the desire to make art that is living stems from the desire for something breathing, performative, and action-based. Participation, sociality, and the organization of bodies in space play a key feature in much of this work. Perhaps in reaction to the steady state of mediated two-dimensional cultural production, or a reaction to the alienating effects of spectacle, artists, activists, citizens, and advertisers alike are rushing headlong into methods of working that allow genuine interpersonal human relationships to develop. The call for art into life at this particular moment in history implies both an urgency to matter as well as a privileging of the lived experience. These are two different things, but within much of this work, they are blended together.

Participation

In recent years, we have seen increased growth in "participatory art": art that requires some action on behalf of the viewer in order to complete the work. Consider *Tiza* (2002) by artists Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla. This public space intervention consisted of twelve enormous pieces of chalk set out in public squares. People used discarded remnants or broke off a chunk to write messages on the ground. Since Allora and Calzadilla generally choose urban environments with politically confrontational histories, the writing tends to reflect political resentment and frustrations.

This is just one example of numerous works that enter life by facilitating participation.

Situated in the “real” world

Clearly, an urge to enter the “real” world inherently implies that there is an “un-real” world where actions do not have impact or resonance. Nonetheless, we find in numerous socially engaged artworks that the desire for art to enter life comprises a spatial component as well. Getting out of the museum or gallery and into the public can often come from an artist’s belief or concern that the designated space for representation takes the teeth out of a work. For example, Amal Kenawy’s *Silence of the Lambs* (2010) focused on a performance in Cairo wherein members of the public were asked to crawl across a congested intersection on their hands and knees; the work critiqued the submissiveness of the general public to the autocratic rule of then-president Hosni Mubarak, and was an ironic precursor to the Arab Spring. Kenawy’s performance entered into life by taking place in the public realm. While this is quite literal, it is important to bear in mind the basic semantic difference as well as the potential risk and cost.

Operating in the political sphere

As much as art entering life can have a spatial connotation, it can also possess a judicial and governmental one as well. For many socially engaged artists, there is a continued interest in impact, and often the realm of the political symbolizes these ambitions. Artist Laurie Jo Reynolds’s long-term project aims to challenge and overturn harsh practices in southern Illinois’s Tamms Supermax Prison. Focusing on the basic political injustice (as she sees it) that this prison uses solitary confinement as a condition of incarceration, and that Tamms meets and exceeds the international definition of torture, Reynolds organized *Tamms Year Ten*, an all-volunteer coalition of prisoners, ex-prisoners, prisoners’ families, and concerned citizens. Reynolds has labeled her efforts “legislative art” which reflects the term coined by Brazilian playwright Augusto Boal’s “legislative theater.” Borrowing from the work of

education theorist Paolo Freire, Augusto Boal produced a new form of living theater in the 1960s whose entire mission was to assist in the politicization and agency of Brazil’s most oppressed. In addition to inventing different modes of theatricality that entered into daily life, such as newspaper theater and invisible theater, he developed a form of participatory politics called “legislative theater” when he was a city council member in Rio de Janeiro.

In a world of vast cultural production, the arts have become an instructive space to gain valuable skill sets in the techniques of performativity, representation, aesthetics, and the creation of affect. These skill sets are not secondary to the landscape of political production but, in fact, necessary for its manifestation. If the world is a stage (as both Shakespeare and Guy Debord foretold), then every person on the planet must learn the skill sets of theater. The realm of the political may perhaps be the most appropriate place for the arts, after all.

WHAT IS MEANT BY FORM?

“THE PUBLIC HAS
A FORM AND ANY
FORM CAN BE ART.”

— Paul Ramírez Jonas

Just as video, painting, and clay are types of forms, people coming together possess forms as well. And while it is difficult to categorize socially engaged art by discipline, we can map various affinities based on methodologies. This includes the political issues they address, such as sustainability, the environment, education, housing, labor, gender, race, colonialism, gentrification, immigration, incarceration, war, borders, and on and on.

Focusing on methodologies is also an attempt to shift the conversation away from the arts’ typical lens of analysis: aesthetics. This is not to say that the visual holds no place in this work, but instead this approach emphasizes



es the designated forms produced for impact. By focusing on how a work approaches the social, as opposed to simply what it looks like, we can better calibrate a language to unpack its numerous engagements.

Types of gatherings

Consider *Please Love Austria: First Austrian Coalition* by the late artist Christoph Schlingensief. For this work, he invited refugees seeking political asylum to compete for either a cash prize or a residency visa, granted through marriage. He locked twelve participants in a shipping container, equipped with a closed circuit television, for one week. Every day, viewers would vote on their least favorite refugees; two were banished from the container and deported back to their native countries. The container, placed outside the Vienna State Opera House, sported blue flags representing Austria's right-wing party, bearing a sign that read, "Foreigners Out." It was clearly controversial because the project used the technique of over-determination to promote and magnify the nascent xenophobia and racism already existing in Austria. The project took place in a public square, and provided both a physical space for people to come together as well as a mediated space for discussion. This gathering of people wasn't what one would call a space of consensus but one of deep discord and frustration.

Types of media manipulation

I have previously discussed the manner in which Women on Waves and Pedro Reyes used the media as a critical element in their work. One can add to this list most of the socially engaged art in this book, including Bijari, Rwanda Healing Project, the Yes Men, and Mel Chin. As the realm of the political and the realm of media become deeply intertwined, media stunts become an increasingly important part of the realm of politics. This is true for those resisting power and those enforcing it. And it reflects a contemporary condition wherein relationships with mediation are the basic components by which political—and thus social—decisions are made.

Research and its presentation

If politics have become performative, so too, has knowledge—in other words, you have to share what you know. Researchers and scientists who feel a sense of political urgency to disseminate their findings might use the skill sets of symbolic manipulation and performativity in order to get their message out. Similarly, we find numerous artists and collectives who deploy aesthetic strategies to spread their message. For example, Ala Plástica's research-based environmental activism focuses on the damage caused when a Shell Oil tank collided with another cargo ship in the Rio de la Plata. Over 5,300 tons of oil spilled into this major Argentine river. Using photographs and drawings, and working with local residents to conduct surveys, the collaborative deploys techniques of socially engaged art in order to bring this issue to light. One should also mention the work of Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency based in Beit Sahour, Palestine, a group that aims to visualize the future re-use of architecture in occupied territories. In places where war, migration, and mass atrocities have become commonplace—such as Rwanda, Beirut, and Palestine—it is not surprising that many artists focus on archives as a way to document histories now lost.

Structural alternatives

The "Do It Yourself" ethic, as it was termed in the early 1990s, has gained cultural traction, and has spread into the basic composition of urban living. Experiments in alternatives—whether the focus is food production, housing, education, bicycling, or fashion—have become a broad form of self-determined sociality. Once just the *modus operandi* of anarchists at the fringes of culture, the practice has now entered the mainstream. The food movement, perhaps inspired by increasing fear over genetically modified organisms in food by large-scale corporate agriculture and horror of cruel animal slaughtering practices, has become an integral element of many urban metropolises. Community Sourced Agriculture (CSAs), guerrilla community gardens, and the Slow Food movement, are all forms of new lived civic life that



takes the work, literally, into one's own hands.

We also find pervasive growth in alternative social programs occurring in response to the evisceration of state-funded social programs by various austerity measures. We find numerous alternative economies and schools at work as well. Fran Illich's *Spacebank* (2005) is just one example of an alternative economy aesthetic/form of living. Launched with just 50 Mexican pesos, *Spacebank* is both an actual and conceptual online bank that offers real investing opportunities, and loans to activists and grassroots organizations. Similarly, Los Angeles-based architect Fritz Haeg offered free classes and workshops in his *Sundown Salons*, which he held in his residence, a geodesic dome. I say "similarly" in so much as these are two art world examples of tendencies reflecting the urge toward a DIY aesthetic that has prevailed for nearly twenty years.

Types of communicating

As group participation increases, the basic skill sets which accompany group process become more useful. Isolated artists must focus on speaking, while groups of people coming together must focus on listening—the art of *not* speaking but hearing. The Los Angeles-based collective Ultra-red writes, "In asserting the priority of organizing herein, Ultra-red, as so often over the years, evokes the procedure so thematic to investigation developed by [Brazilian radical pedagogue] Paulo Freire." Grant Kester has come up with the term "dialogic art" to discuss such methods of art production that emphasize conversation, and certainly many artists privilege conversation as a mode of action. In evoking Freire, Ultra-red also points towards a form of education that must address conditions of power as much as it does culture and politics. The personal is not only political but the interpersonal contains the seeds of political conflict inherently. In reflecting on his work with the sixteen-year-old experimental community housing project/art residency/socially engaged Project Row Houses, Rick Lowe stated in an interview with the *New York Times*, "I was doing big, billboard-size paintings and cutout sculptures dealing with social

issues, and one of the students told me that, sure, the work reflected what was going on in his community, but it wasn't what the community needed. If I was an artist, he said, why didn't I come up with some kind of creative solution to issues instead of just telling people like him what they already knew. That was the defining moment that pushed me out of the studio."

FORMS OF LIFE

Tania Bruguera's call to return Duchamp's urinal to the restroom is a poignant, provocative notion. For once it has been returned, what do we call it? Art or life? Once art begins to look like life, how are we to distinguish between the two? When faced with such complex riddles, often the best route is to rephrase the question. Whether this work can be considered art is a dated debate in the visual arts. I suggest a more interesting question: If this work is *not* art, then what are the methods we can use to understand its effects, affects, and impact? In raising these questions, I would like to quote the former U.S. Defense Secretary responsible for leading the United States into the Iraq War, Donald Rumsfeld: "If you have a problem, make it bigger." Rumsfeld's adage has been taken to heart as we begin to, hopefully, solve the conundrum of art and life by aggregating projects from numerous disciplines whose manifestations in the world reflect a social ecosystem of affinities. By introducing such a broad array of approaches, the tensions nascent in contemporary art exacerbate to the point of rupture. The point is not to destroy the category of art, but—straining against edges where art blurs into the everyday—to take a snapshot of cultural production at the beginning of the 21st century.

An important project that defies easy categorization is Lowe's Project Row Houses. Situated in a low-income, predominately African-American neighborhood in Houston's Northern Third Ward, Project Row Houses was spurred by the artist's interest in the art of John Biggers, who painted scenes of African-American life in row house neighborhoods, as well as his desire to make a profound, long-term commit-



ment to a specific neighborhood. As the community was on the verge of being demolished by the City of Houston, the project began with the purchase of several row houses, which have been transformed into sites of local cultural participation as well as artist residencies. Over the years, many artists have come and gone, more homes have been purchased, and the row houses have undergone rehabilitation. The project initiated a program for the neighborhood's single mothers, providing childcare and housing so that the mothers could attend school. Project Row Houses has built trust and strong relationships with the surrounding neighborhood, offering a sustainable growth model that is perfect for the neighborhood, one created from the ground up.

Project Row Houses is a nonprofit organization initiated by an artist. If it can be included as a socially engaged artwork, why not include more nonprofit organizations as artworks as

well? Many artists and art collectives use a broad range of bureaucratic and administrative skills that typically lie in the domain of larger institutions, such as marketing, fundraising, grant writing, real estate development, investing in start-ups, city planning, and educational programming. As opposed to assuming there is an inherent difference between artist-initiated projects and non-artist-initiated projects, I have opted to simply include them all. Let us call this the "cattle call" method. While it might feel strange to include nonprofit art organizations such as Cemeti Art House and Foundation in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, which has been involved in post-earthquake cultural programming, or the work of the United Indian Health Services located in Northern California, which combines traditional cultural programming with access to health care, consider what they do, not who they say they are. Certainly these projects are not specifically artworks, but their



collaborative and participatory spirit, community activism, and deployment of cultural programming as part of their operations makes their work appear close to some projects that arise from an arts background. In fact, there are thousands of other nonprofits whose work could be considered and highlighted as well.

In an even greater stretch of the framework of socially engaged art, some works have been included in *Living as Form* that possess no singular author or organization. For example, the celebrations in Harlem on the night of Barack Obama's election were spontaneous eruptions of joy and street parading in a community that had long thought the election of a black president to be an impossibility. And, in a similar vein, the protests that have erupted across the Middle East—particularly those in Tunisia and Egypt—have become models of spontaneous popular action facilitated across dynamic social networks with the collective desire to

contest power. Does this constitute art? Does this constitute a civic action? Certainly some questions are easier to answer than others.

This book's title borrows from Harald Szeemann's landmark 1969 exhibition at Kunsthall Bern, *When Attitudes Become Form: Live in Your Head*, which featured artists including Joseph Beuys, Barry Flanagan, Eva Hesse, Jannis Kounellis, Walter de Maria, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, and Lawrence Weiner, introducing an array of artists whose conceptual works challenged the formal arrangements of what constituted art at the time. The show highlighted a diverse range of tendencies that would later materialize as movements from conceptual art, land art, Minimalism, and Arte Povera. Writing on the exhibition, from Szeemann's catalog, Hans-Joachim Müller stated, "For the first time, the importance of form seemed to be questioned altogether by the conceptualization of form: whatever has a cer-

tain form can be measured, described, understood, misunderstood. Forms can be criticized, disintegrated, assembled." Such a break is in the air again, but now accompanied by a keen awareness that living itself exists in forms that must be questioned, rearranged, mobilized, and undone. For the first time, the importance of *forms of living* seems to be questioned altogether by the conceptualization of *living as form*. Whatever has a certain form can be measured, described, understood, misunderstood. *Forms of living* can be criticized, disintegrated, assembled.

PART II: NEOLIBERALISM AND THE RISE OF SPECTACULAR LIVING

Why does this book focus on the last twenty years? Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a new neoliberal order has emerged. Loosely defined, neoliberalism as a political order privileges free trade and open markets, resulting in maximizing the role of the private sector in determining priorities and deemphasizing the role of the public and the state's function in protecting and supporting them. This pro-capitalist governmentalism has radically shaped the current geopolitical and social map. From the global boosterism of the 1990s to the subsequent hangover and contestation in the 2000s, this vast history includes the growth of capitalism and free-market influence on international governance; formation of the European Union; genocide in Rwanda; the events of September 11, 2001, and ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; the bellicose efforts of the Bush administration; and flexible labor in the Western world where decentralized businesses hired and fired quickly, and temporary work became a more familiar way of life. As these policies became commonplace, we found a widespread exacerbation of nascent race and class divisions. The prison industry in the United States now booms, and the gap between rich and poor increases. Widespread protests in Europe and Latin America yielded the term "precarity," which gained traction as a description of social life always in jeopardy. Austerity measures forced governments such

as Argentina, Spain, Greece, and Ireland to eliminate their social welfare programs and ignited protest movements. In Latin America, new left governments emerged that redefined the region's relationship to culture, capitalism, and power.

The last twenty years were also accompanied by a global growth of advertising in a more media-rich world—from film to cable television to the explosion of video games to the rapid formation of the Internet and social media. Using the same symbolic manipulation and design methods that have long been the bread and butter of artists, the growth of "creative industries" were undeniably part of the cultural landscape. While in the 1940s, the Frankfurt School philosophers Adorno and Horkheimer warned of an impending wave of capitalist-produced culture that would sweep across the world, the last twenty years has seen that wave become a reality. Guy Debord and the Situationists of Paris 1968 coined the term "spectacle" to refer to the process by which culture, expressions of a society's self-understanding, is produced within the capitalist machine. Typified by the image of an audience at a cinema passively watching television and film, the spectacle can be seen as shorthand for a world condition wherein images are made for the purpose of sales. Certainly when considered from the standpoint of scale, the sheer amount of culture we as a global community consume, as well as produce, indicates a radical break with our relationship to cultures of past eras. Over the last twenty years we find people forced to produce new forms of action in order to account for this radically altered playing field. We find a form of activism and political action that is increasingly media savvy. As opposed to thinking of a war fought with only guns, tanks, and bodies, wars were fought using cameras, the Internet, and staged media stunts.

In 1994, on the same day that NAFTA was signed into office, the Zapatista EZLN Movement emerged in the southern jungles of the Mexican province Chiapas. An indigenous movement demanding autonomy and broadcasting its message via a ski mask-wearing,

pipe-smoking Subcommandante Marcos, the Zapatistas were savvy in their early use of cultural symbols and the Internet to rally the international sympathies of the left to their cause. There is no way to conceive of the protest in Seattle in 1999 as anything but inspired by the Zapatistas' use of the carnivalesque, poetics, the Internet, and social networking culture. This is to say that over the last twenty years, we have seen the integration of cultural manipulation into its most poignant social movements and accompanying forms of activism. Certainly the antics of the Yes Men—who poke fun at corporate power through their numerous appearances on television and in print media, posing as executives—is another example of resistance manifesting itself in the media-sphere via the manipulation of cultural symbols.

With that in mind, it should be said that this present spectacular reality is simply the chess board we, as people on the planet, must strategically move across. However, the way in which we choose to produce politics and meaning on it yields different ethical and political ramifications. The September 11th attack and destruction of the World Trade Center Towers by two hijacked planes, and the subsequent media hysteria, were clearly considered by their creators in terms of spectacle, not just casualties. In reflecting on this spectacular political terrain, the theoretical collective Retort wrote, "One of the formative moments in the education of Mohammad Atta, we are told, was when he came to realize the conservation of Islamic Cairo, in which he hoped to participate as a newly trained town planner, was to obey the logic of Disney World."

When considered within the framework of socially engaged art, such events help make sense of the media antics and performativity of hallmark projects such as *Women on Waves* and *Palas Por Pistolas*. They, too, are meaning-makers in an era of vast spectacle. The same can be said of the aesthetic approaches to research, its presentation, and engaging the political terrain. Who needs to worry about art, when all the world is literally a stage? So rather than thinking of the last twenty years as

the "post-Cold War" era, we might think of it as the moment in which the spectacle became the increasing reality for not only culture-makers, but all people. Reflecting on the fall of the Berlin Wall, Guy Debord wrote, "This driving of the spectacle toward modernization and unification, together with all of the other tendencies toward the simplification of society, what in 1989 led the Russian bureaucracy suddenly, and as one man, to convert to the current *ideology* of democracy—in other words, to the dictatorial freedom of the market, as tempered by the recognition of the rights of homo spectator."

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the crumbling of the Soviet Union can also be seen as a rise of the spectacle behind the veil of democracy. And because the spectacle enjoys its veils and illusions (as a creature of symbolic production), perhaps it can be symbolized by the mass-media phenomenon that we have lived with for the last twenty years: reality television. The format started in 1992 with the launch of MTV's *The Real World*, a supposedly real-life drama about multicultural young people living together, on camera, 24 hours a day. The idea was greeted with paranoiac Orwellian concerns of Big Brother (enjoyably enough, the name of the inspiration for *The Real World* launched in Britain), but over the course of time, what was to stand out about the show was that it not only predicted the largest growth market in television programming, but also foretold the Internet's now-commonplace role in documenting everyday life. Since 1991, contemporary life has become a kind of schizophrenic existence, where we are both on television as well as in the world. We are both being mediated by things as well as experiencing them.

Why mention this in a discussion of socially engaged art? Without understanding that the manipulation of symbols has become a method of production for the dominant powers in contemporary society, we cannot appreciate the forms of resistance to that power that come from numerous artists, activists, and engaged citizens. We find it in the rhetoric of urban cultural economy guru Richard Florida whose

quick formulas on the creative class have been accepted and built on by major cities in the United States. A pro-arts, pro-real estate development advocate, Florida's quick fix to economic woes explicitly draws a connection between the arts and the global urban concern of gentrification. While it is not the purview of this book, one could easily write a different one based on the practices of the powerful as well. Take, for example, fast-food chain McDonald's Ronald McDonald House. Here we have a global corporation who offers, "essential medical, dental, and educational services to more than 150,000 children annually." We can also see social programs initiated by most major corporations of the United States as well as the manipulation of cultural symbols in media by right-wing political organizations such as The Tea Party. Socially engaged artworks, perversely enough, are not just the purview of artists, but, in fact, can additionally be deployed by capitalists for the production of their own version of meaning and advertising.

It is upon this stage of vast spectacle that we must attempt to create meaningful relationships and actions. And this is not easy. For as the world of *The Real World* moves from a fiction to a reality, we find ourselves confused by whether things are advertisements or what they say they are. The artist Shepard Fairey's guerrilla wheatpaste poster campaigns across the world have garnered not only great press but also much cynicism as many in the street art community accuse the work of being a corporate-sponsored commercial enterprise. And in an era in which the production of culture is often used as an advertisement, artists too can be guilty of projects wherein the production of art is simply advertising for the ultimate product: themselves. Thus, similar laments might be thrown at some of the work in *Living as Form*. Is an artist genuinely producing a socially engaged artwork to help people, or is it yet another career-climbing maneuver? Does public art in a city serve its current residents, or does it operate as an advertisement for future gentrification?

This paranoia of what cultural producers actually want is an integral part of a global cul-

ture caught in decades of spectacular production. It has radically altered not just the arts, but politics in general. Paranoia is the binding global ethos. With that freakish personality trait in mind, many artists have had to reconfigure their methods to account for this lack of transparency. I would like to call this the strategic turn, borrowing from French theorist Michel de Certeau's terms the "tactical" and the "strategic"—notions that explore how aesthetics are produced in space. If the tactical is a temporary, interventionist form of trespass, the strategic is the long-term investment in space.

Throughout the 1990s, the relational aesthetics of contemporary art began to reveal certain political limitations. By being discreet and short-lived, the works often reflected a convenient tendency for quick consumption and exclusivity that garnered favor among museums and galleries. When the artist Rirkrit Tiravanija cooked Pad Thai in a Soho gallery, the work was praised as a radical redefinition of what constituted art. This simple maneuver was heralded by Nicholas Bourriaud as a seminal project in the production of the genre "relational aesthetics." Over time, many in the activist art milieu viewed this kind of discreet performativity as simply digested by the conditions of power. For some, there were too many similarities between a VIP cocktail party and the intimate personal experiences advocated by much of the work gathered under the heading of relational aesthetics. Similarly, suspicions of the global biennial circuit arose; artists who espoused supposed political ambition and content seemed to simply travel the world trading in the symbolic culture of activism. To quote the artist, anarchist, and activist Josh MacPhee, "I am tired of artists fetishizing activist culture and showing it to the world as though it were their invention."

Thus, the strategic turn where we find works that are explicitly local, long-term, and community-based. Rick Lowe's Project Row Houses is certainly an example, as is Laurie Jo Reynolds's *Tamms Year Ten* campaign. The organization Park Fiction combined the efforts of numerous parties, including artists, musicians, filmmakers, and community

activists in order to produce a public park in Hamburg by rallying the support and input of numerous community members. What started as a civic campaign in 1994 was finally realized in 2005 after hundreds of meetings, arguments, events, and exhibitions. These are projects that are deeply rooted in community relations and motivated by a commitment to political change. They also gain community traction by committing to an idea over time. As publics become increasingly aware of the hit-and-run style of not only artists, but other industries of spectacle—such as advertising, film, and television—they develop a suspicion of those “helping them.” As with many long-term efforts, the longer the project, the more the artist or artists must behave like organizational structures in order to operate efficiently, and combat fatigue and overextension.

At the time of this writing, the protests and occupations of what are being called the Arab Spring, the European Summer, and the American Autumn are moving apace, catching many governments and societies by surprise. In consideration of the strategic turn by artists and activists, we find a similar reflection in the new social movements of the current period. Whereas the protests of the alt-globalization movement possessed a hit-and-run style focusing on various gatherings by large governmental and corporate bodies, including the WTO (World Trade Organization), the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), the G8 (Group of 8), the IMF (International Monetary Fund), et al, the current occupation strategies stay in one place over a longer period of time.

GLITCHES IN THE FORMS

While the language for defining this work is evolving, some criticisms and considerations find their way into most discussions. A constant battle (which is difficult to resolve) is the matter of efficacy and pedagogy between the symbolic, the mediated, and the practical. When is a project working? What are its intentions? Who is the intended audience? When is an artist simply using the idea of social work in order to progress her career? Are these social-

ly engaged works perhaps a little too sympathetic with the prevailing values of our time and, thus, make themselves vulnerable to state instrumentalization? Again, socially engaged art can easily be used as advertising for vast structures of power, from governments to corporations. Determining which forms of social engagement truly lead towards social justice is a constant source of debate. Knowing this, in itself, is useful.

As art enters life, one must consider the powerful role that affect plays in the production of meaning. The concept of affect derives from the understanding that how things make one feel is substantively different than how things make one think. As cultural production is often geared towards emotive impact, understanding how cultural projects function politically and socially would benefit from an understanding of this poorly analyzed concept. In addition, how these projects function and are understood is as varied as the audiences they impact. Unmooring this work from the strict analysis of aesthetics should not only assist in truly appreciating its complexities, but also liberate the dialogue of aesthetics to include knowledge sets of the global public. Moving across racial, cultural, disciplinary, and geographic boundaries provides a complex public to consider. Obviously a person with a contemporary art background appreciates a socially engaged artwork differently than someone who does not. But more important than disciplinary-specific knowledge are the vast differences in approach developed out of geographic, racial, class, gender, and sexuality differences. A form of analysis that can account for this broad spectrum of difference (while obviously difficult) will at least provide a framework for interpreting social phenomena from an honest position based in reality.

Socially engaged art may, in fact, be a misnomer. Defying discursive boundaries, its very flexible nature reflects an interest in producing effects and affects in the world rather than focusing on the form itself. In doing so, this work has produced new forms of living that force a reconsideration and perhaps new language altogether. As navigating cultural sym-

bols becomes a necessary skill set in basic communication and pedagogy, let alone community organizing, the lessons of theater, art, architecture, and design have been incorporated in a complex array of social organizing methodologies. Deep research, media campaigns, dinners, conversations, performances, and online networking are just a few of the numerous techniques deployed in this strategic and tactical playing field.

As Duchamp placed the urinal in the museum at the beginning of the twentieth century, perhaps it should be no surprise to find artists returning it to the real at the dawn of the twenty-first. This maneuver could easily be interpreted as yet another art historical reference. However, I suspect the more important interpretation is that this maneuver reflects a necessary recalibration of the cultural environment surrounding the world today. For, as art enters life, the question that will motivate people far more than What is art? is the much more metaphysically relevant and pressing What is life?

PARTICIPATION AND SPECTACLE: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

CLAIRE BISHOP



1. SPECTACLE TODAY

One of the key words used in artists' self-definitions of their socially engaged practice is "spectacle," so often invoked as the entity that participatory art opposes itself to, both artistically and politically. When examining artists' motivations for turning to social participation as a strategy in their work, one repeatedly encounters the same claim: contemporary capitalism produces passive subjects with very little agency or empowerment. For many artists and curators on the left, Guy Debord's indictment of the alienating and divisive effects of capitalism in *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967) strike to the heart of why participation is important as a project: it re-humanizes a society rendered numb and fragmented by the repressive instrumentality of capitalist production. This position, with more or less Marxist overtones, is put forward by most advocates of socially engaged and activist art. Given the market's near total satu-

ration of our image repertoire—so the argument goes—artistic practice can no longer revolve around the construction of objects to be consumed by a passive bystander. Instead, there must be an art of action, interfacing with reality, taking steps—however small—to repair the social bond. As the French philosopher Jacques Rancière points out, "the 'critique of the spectacle' often remains the alpha and the omega of the 'politics of art'".¹

But what do we really mean by spectacle in a visual art context? "Spectacle" has a particular, almost unique status within art history and criticism, since it has an incomparable political pedigree (thanks to the Situationist International, or SI) and directly raises the question of visibility. As frequently used by art historians and critics associated with the journal *October*, spectacle denotes a wide range of attributes: for Rosalind Krauss writing on the late capitalist museum, it means the absence of historical positioning and a capitulation to

pure presentness; for James Meyer, arguing against Olafur Eliasson's *Weather Project*, it denotes an overwhelming scale that dwarfs viewers and eclipses the human body as a point of reference; for Hal Foster writing on the Bilbao Guggenheim, it denotes the triumph of corporate branding; for Benjamin Buchloh denouncing Bill Viola, it refers to an uncritical use of new technology. In short, spectacle today connotes a wide range of ideas—from size, scale, and sexiness to corporate investment and populism. And yet, for Debord, “spectacle” does not describe the characteristics of a work of art or architecture, but is a definition of social relations under capitalism (but also under totalitarian regimes). Individual subjects experience society as atomized and fragmented because social experience is mediated by images—either the “diffuse” images of consumerism or the “concentrated” images of the leader. As Debord's film, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1971), makes clear, his arguments stem from an anxiety about a nascent consumer culture in the '60s, with its tidal wave of seductive imagery. But the question as to whether or not we still exist in a society of the spectacle was posed by Baudrillard as early as 1981, who dispatches not only Debord but also Foucault in his essay “The Precession of Simulacra”:

We are witnessing the end of perspective and panoptic space... and hence the very abolition of the spectacular.... We are no longer in the society of the spectacle which the situationists talked about, nor in the specific types of alienation and repression which this implied. The medium itself is no longer identifiable as such, and the merging of the medium and the message (McLuhan) is the first great formula of this new age.²

More recently, Boris Groys has suggested that in today's culture of self-exhibitionism (in Facebook, YouTube or Twitter, which he provocatively compares to the text/image compositions of conceptual art) we have a “spectacle without spectators”:

the artist needs a spectator who can overlook the immeasurable quantity of artistic production and formulate an aesthetic judgment that would single out this particular artist from the mass of other artists. Now, it is obvious that such a spectator does not exist—it could be God, but we have already been informed of the fact that God is dead.³

In other words, one of the central requirements of art is that it is given to be seen, and reflected upon, by a spectator. Participatory art in the strictest sense forecloses the traditional idea of spectatorship and suggests a new understanding of art without audiences, one in which everyone is a producer. At the same time, the existence of an audience is ineliminable, since it is impossible for everyone in the world to participate in every project.

2. HISTORY

Indeed, the dominant narrative of the history of socially engaged, participatory art across the twentieth century is one in which the activation of the audience is positioned against its mythic counterpart, passive spectatorial consumption. Participation thus forms part of a larger narrative that traverses modernity: “art must be directed against contemplation, against spectatorship, against the passivity of the masses paralyzed by the spectacle of modern life”.⁴ This desire to activate the audience in participatory art is at the same time a drive to emancipate it from a state of alienation induced by the dominant ideological order—be this consumer capitalism, totalitarian socialism, or military dictatorship. Beginning from this premise, participatory art aims to restore and realize a communal, collective space of shared social engagement. But this is achieved in different ways: either through constructivist gestures of social impact, which refute the injustice of the world by proposing an alternative, or through a nihilist redoubling of alienation, which negates the world's injustice and illogicality on its own terms. In both instances, the work seeks to forge a collective, co-authoring, participatory social body, but

one does this affirmatively (through utopian realization), the other indirectly (through the negation of negation).

For example, Futurism and Constructivism both offered gestures of social impact and the invention of a new public sphere—one geared towards fascism, the other to reinforce a new Bolshevik world order. Shortly after this period, Paris Dada “took to the streets” in order to reach a wider audience, annexing the social forms of the guided tour and the trial in order to experiment with a more nihilistic type of artistic practice in the public sphere. It is telling that in the first phase of this orientation towards the social, participation has no given political alignment: it is a strategy that can be equally associated with Italian Fascism, Bolshevik communism, and an anarchic negation of the political.

In the postwar period, we find a similar range of participatory strategies, now more or less tied to leftist politics, and culminating in the theater of 1968. In Paris, the SI developed alternatives to visual art in the “derive and constructed situation”; while the Groupe Recher-

che d'Art Visuel devised participatory actions, both in the form of installations and street environments. Both of these are affirmative in tenor, but as a critique of consumer capitalism. Jean-Jacques Lebel's anarchic and eroticized Happenings provide a different model—“the negation of negation”—in which the audience and performers are further alienated from an already alienating world, via disturbing and transgressive activities that aimed to produce a group mind or *egregore*. When these artistic strategies were put into play in different ideological contexts (such as South America and Eastern Europe), the aims and intentions of participation yielded different meanings. In Argentina, where a brutal, U.S.-backed military dictatorship was imposed in 1966, it gave rise to aggressive and fragmented modes of social action, with an emphasis on class antagonism, reification, and alienation. In Czechoslovakia, brought into line with Soviet “normalization” after 1968, participatory art had a more escapist tone, with avant-garde actions often masquerading under vernacular forms (weddings, parties, and festivals), often in remote



locations, in order to avoid detection by the secret police. Art was disguised by life in order to sustain itself as a place of nonalienation. The work of Collective Actions Group (CAG), active in Moscow from 1976 onwards, further problematizes contemporary claims that participation is synonymous with collectivism, and thus inherently opposed to capitalism; rather than reinforcing the collectivist dogma of communism, CAG deployed participation as a means to create a privatized sphere of individual expression.

Further analogies to contemporary social practice can be found in the rise of the community arts movement after 1968, whose history provides a cautionary tale for today's artists averse to theorizing the artistic value of their work. Emphasizing process rather than end result, and basing their judgments on ethical criteria (about how and whom they work with) rather than on the character of their artistic outcomes, the community arts movement found itself subject to manipulation—and eventually instrumentalization—by the state. From an agitational force campaigning for social justice (in the early 1970s), it became a harmless branch of the welfare state (by the 1980s): the kindly folk who can be relied upon to mop up wherever the government wishes to absolve itself of responsibility.

And so we find ourselves faced today with an important sector of artists who renounce the vocabularies of contemporary art, claiming to be engaged in more serious, worldly, and political issues. Such anti-aesthetic refusals are not new: just as we have come to recognize Dada cabaret, situationist *détournement*, or dematerialized conceptual and performance art as having their own aesthetics of production and circulation, so too do the often formless-looking photo-documents of participatory art have their own experiential regime. The point is not to regard these anti-aesthetic phenomena as objects of a new formalism (reading areas, parades, demonstrations, discussions, ubiquitous plywood platforms, endless photographs of people), but to analyze how these contribute to the social and artistic experience being generated.

3. TWO CRITIQUES

One of the questions that is continually posed to me is the following: Surely it is better for one art project to improve one person's life than for it not to happen at all? The history of participatory art allows us to get critical distance on this question, and to see it as the latest instantiation of concerns that have dogged this work from its inception: the tension between equality and quality, between participation and spectatorship, and between art and real life. These conflicts indicate that social and artistic judgments do not easily merge; indeed, they seem to demand different criteria. This impasse surfaces in every printed debate and panel discussion on participatory and socially engaged art. For one sector of artists, curators, and critics, a good project appeases a superegoic injunction to ameliorate society; if social agencies have failed, then art is obliged to step in. In this schema, judgments are based on a humanist ethics, often inspired by Christianity. What counts is to offer ameliorative solutions, however short-term, rather than to expose contradictory social truths. For another sector of artists, curators, and critics, judgments are based on a sensible response to the artist's work, both in and beyond its original context. In this schema, ethics are nugatory, because art is understood continually to throw established systems of value into question, including morality; devising new languages with which to represent and question social contradiction is more important. The social discourse accuses the artistic discourse of amorality and inefficacy, because it is insufficient merely to reveal, reduplicate, or reflect upon the world; what matters is social change. The artistic discourse accuses the social discourse of remaining stubbornly attached to existing categories, and focusing on micropolitical gestures at the expense of sensuous immediacy (as a potential locus of disalienation). Either social conscience dominates, or the rights of the individual to question social conscience. Art's relationship to the social is either underpinned by morality or it is underpinned by freedom.⁵

This binary is echoed in Boltanski and Chiapello's perceptive distinction of the difference between artistic and social critiques of capitalism. The artistic critique, rooted in nineteenth-century bohemianism, draws upon two sources of indignation towards capitalism: on the one hand, disenchantment and inauthenticity, and on the other, oppression. The artistic critique, they explain, "foregrounds the loss of meaning and, in particular, the loss of the sense of what is beautiful and valuable, which derives from standardization and generalized commodification, affecting not only everyday objects but also artworks ... and human beings." Against this state of affairs, the artistic critique advocates "the freedom of artists, their rejection of any contamination of aesthetics by ethics, their refusal of any form of subjection in time and space and, in its extreme form, any kind of work".⁶ The social critique, by contrast, draws on different sources of indignation towards capitalism: the egoism of private interests, and the growing poverty of the working classes in a society of unprecedented wealth. This social critique necessarily rejects the moral neutrality, individualism, and egotism of artists. The artistic and the social critique are not directly compatible, Boltanski and Chiapello warn us, and exist in continual tension with one another.⁷

The clash between artistic and social critiques recurs most visibly at certain historical moments, and the reappearance of participatory art is symptomatic of this clash. It tends to occur at moments of political transition and upheaval: in the years leading to Italian Fascism, in the aftermath of the 1917 Revolution, in the widespread social dissent that led to 1968, and its aftermath in the 1970s. At each historical moment participatory art takes a different form, because it seeks to negate different artistic and sociopolitical objects. In our own times, its resurgence accompanies the consequences of the collapse of communism in 1989, the apparent absence of a viable left alternative, the emergence of contemporary "post-political" consensus, and the near total marketization of art and education.⁸ The paradox of this situation is that participation in

the West now has more to do with the populist agendas of neoliberal governments. Even though participatory artists stand against neoliberal capitalism, the values they impute to their work are understood formally (in terms of opposing individualism and the commodity object), without recognizing that so many other aspects of this art practice dovetail even more perfectly with neoliberalism's recent forms (networks, mobility, project work, affective labor).

As this ground has shifted over the course of the twentieth century, so the identity of participants has been reimagined at each historical moment: from a crowd (1910s), to the masses (1920s), to the people (late 1960s/1970s), to the excluded (1980s), to community (1990s), to today's volunteers whose participation is continuous with a culture of reality television and social networking. From the audience's perspective, we can chart this as a shift from an audience that demands a role (expressed as hostility towards avant-garde artists who keep control of the proscenium), to an audience that enjoys its subordination to strange experiences devised for them by an artist, to an audience that is encouraged to be a co-producer of the work (and who, occasionally, can even get paid for this involvement). This could be seen as a heroic narrative of the increased activation and agency of the audience, but we might also see it as a story of their ever-increasing voluntary subordination to the artist's will, and of the commodification of human bodies in a service economy (since voluntary participation is also unpaid labor).

Arguably, this is a story that runs parallel with the rocky fate of democracy itself, a term to which participation has always been wedded: from a demand for acknowledgement, to representation, to the consensual consumption of one's own image—be this in a work of art, YouTube, Flickr, or reality TV. Consider the media profile accorded to Anthony Gormley's *One and Other* (2009), a project to allow members of the public to continuously occupy the empty "fourth plinth" of Trafalgar Square in London, one hour at a time for one hundred days. Gormley received 34,520 applica-



tions for 2,400 places, and the activities of the plinth's occupants were continually streamed online.⁹ Although the artist referred to *One and Other* as "an open space of possibility for many to test their sense of self and how they might communicate this to a wider world," the project was described by *The Guardian*, not unfairly, as "Twitter Art."¹⁰ In a world where everyone can air their views to everyone we are faced not with mass empowerment but with an endless stream of banal egos. Far from being oppositional to spectacle, participation has now entirely merged with it.

This new proximity between spectacle and participation underlines, for me, the necessity of sustaining a tension between artistic and social critiques. The most striking projects that constitute the history of participatory art unseat all of the polarities on which this discourse is founded (individual/collective, author/spectator, active/passive, real life/art) but not with the goal of collapsing them. In so doing, they hold the artistic and social critiques in tension. Félix Guattari's

paradigm of transversality offers one such way of thinking through these artistic operations: he leaves art as a category in its place, but insists upon its constant flight into and across other disciplines, putting both art and the social into question, even while simultaneously reaffirming art as a universe of value. Jacques Rancière offers another: the aesthetic regime is constitutively contradictory, shuttling between autonomy and heteronomy ("the aesthetic experience is effective inasmuch as it is the experience of that *and*"¹¹). He argues that in art and education alike, there needs to be a mediating object—a spectacle that stands between the idea of the artist and the feeling and interpretation of the spectator: "This spectacle is a third thing, to which both parts can refer but which prevents any kind of 'equal' or 'undistorted' transmission. It is a mediation between them. [...] The same thing which links them must separate them."¹² In different ways, Rancière and Guattari offer alternative frameworks for thinking the artistic and the social simultaneously; for both, art and the social

Above: At the New Orleans Safehouse, Mel Chin and a panel of experts announce *Operation Paydirt: New Orleans*, a massive art and science project to take on lead pollution in the city (Courtesy Fundred Dollar Bill Project).

are not to be reconciled or collapsed, but sustained in continual tension.

4. THE LADDER AND THE CONTAINER

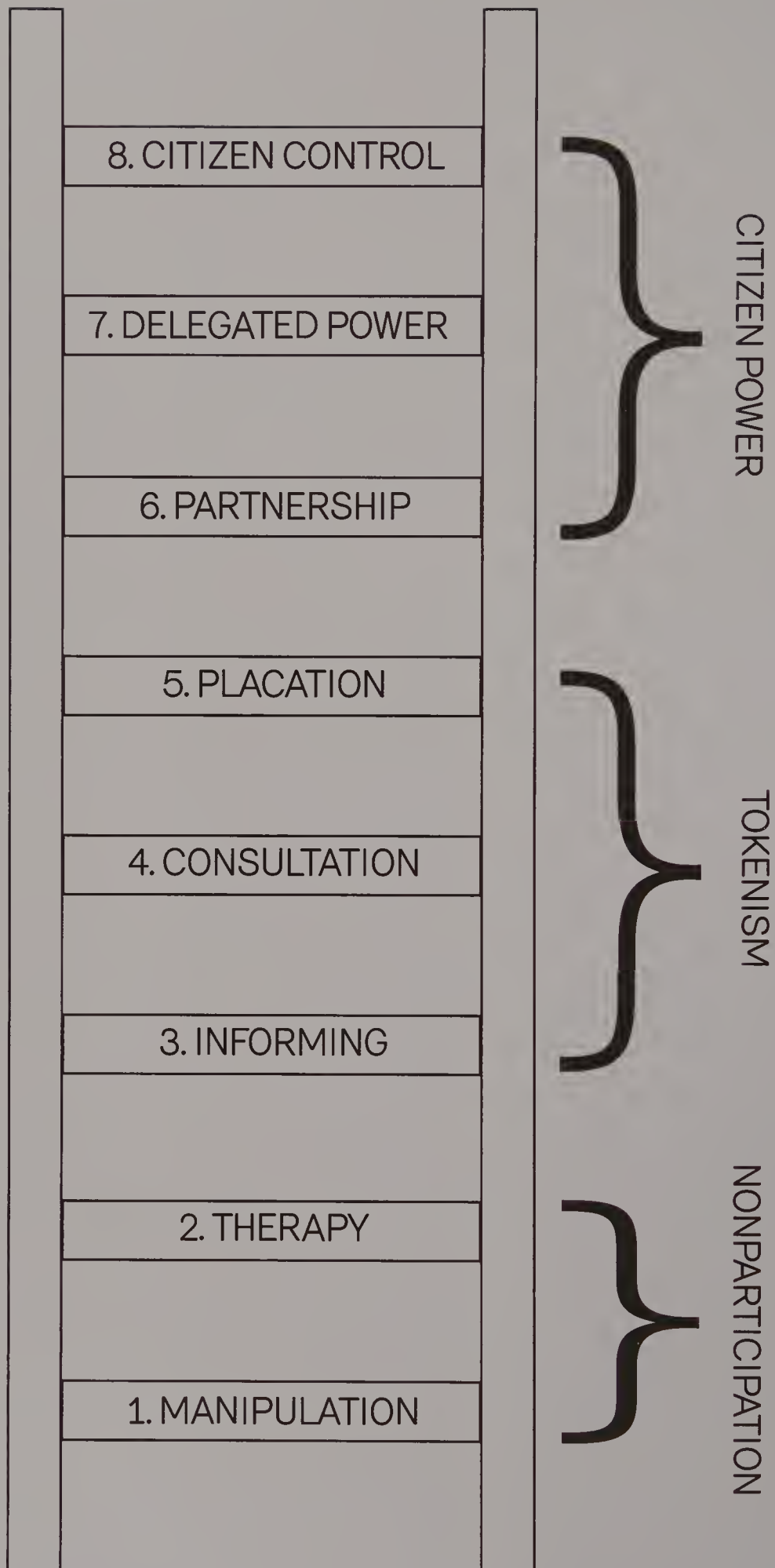
I am interested in these theoretical models of analysis because they do not reduce art to a question of ethically good or bad examples, nor do they forge a straightforward equation between forms of democracy in art and forms of democracy in society. Most of the contemporary discourse on participatory art implies an evaluative schema akin to that laid out in the classic diagram "The Ladder of Participation," published in an architectural journal in 1969 to accompany an article about forms of citizen involvement.¹³ The ladder has eight rungs. The bottom two indicate the least participatory forms of citizen engagement: the non-participation of mere presence in "manipulation" and "therapy." The next three rungs are degrees of tokenism—"informing," "consultation," and "placation"—which gradually increase the attention paid by power to the everyday voice. At the top of the ladder we find "partnership," "delegated power," and the ultimate goal, "citizen control." The diagram provides a useful set of distinctions for thinking about the claims to participation made by those in power, and is frequently cited by architects and planners. It is tempting to make an equation (and many have done so) between the value of a work of art and the degree of participation it involves, turning the Ladder of Participation into a gauge for measuring the efficacy of artistic practice.¹⁴

But while the Ladder provides us with helpful and nuanced differences between forms of civic participation, it falls short of corresponding to the complexity of artistic gestures. The most challenging works of art do not follow this schema, because models of democracy in art do not have an intrinsic relationship to models of democracy in society. The equation is misleading and does not recognize art's ability to generate other, more paradoxical criteria. The works I have discussed in the preceding chapters do not offer anything like citizen control. The artist relies upon the participants' creative exploitation of the situation that he/she offers, just as participants require the art-

ist's cue and direction. This relationship is a continual play of mutual tension, recognition, and dependency—more akin to the collectively negotiated dynamic of stand-up comedy, or to BDSM sex, than to a ladder of progressively more virtuous political forms.

A case study, now 11 years old, illustrates this argument that art is both grounded in and suspends reality, and does this via a mediating object or third term: *Please Love Austria* (2000) devised and largely performed by the German filmmaker and artist Christoph Schlingensiefel (1960–2010). Commissioned to produce a work for the Wiener Festwochen, Schlingensiefel chose to respond directly to the recent electoral success of the far-right nationalist party led by Jörg Haider (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, or FPÖ). The FPÖ's campaign had included overtly xenophobic slogans and the word *überfremdung* (domination by foreign influences), once employed by the Nazis, to describe a country overrun with foreigners. Schlingensiefel erected a shipping container outside the Opera House in the center of Vienna, topped with a large banner bearing the phrase *Ausländer Raus* (Foreigners Out). Inside the container, *Big Brother*-style living accommodations were installed for a group of asylum-seekers, relocated from a detention center outside the city. Their activities were broadcast through the internet television station webfreetv.com, and via this station viewers could vote daily for the ejection of their least favorite refugee. At 8 p.m. each day, for six days, the two most unpopular inhabitants were sent back to the deportation center. The winner was purportedly offered a cash prize and the prospect—depending on the availability of volunteers—of Austrian citizenship through marriage. The event is documented by the Austrian filmmaker Paul Poet in an evocative and compelling ninety-minute film, *Ausländer Raus! Schlingensiefel's Container* (2002).

Please Love Austria is typical Schlingensiefel in its desire to antagonize the public and stage provocation. His early film work frequently alluded to contemporary taboos: mixing Nazism, obscenities, disabilities, and assorted sexual perversions in films such as



Above: Sherry Arnstein's *Ladder of Participation* was originally published in the July 1969 issue of the *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* (Courtesy Sherry Arnstein). Opposite: The office of Tania Bruguera's Immigrant Movement International is located in the diverse neighborhood of Corona in Queens, New York, and provides a space for outreach activities for the local immigrant community (Courtesy Tania Bruguera and Creative Time).

German Chainsaw Massacre (1990) and *Terror 2000* (1992), once described as "filth for intellectuals."¹⁵ In the late 1990s Schlingensief began making interventions into public space, including the formation of a political party, *Chance 2000* (1998–2000), which targeted the unemployed, disabled, and other recipients of welfare with the slogan "Vote For Yourself." *Chance 2000* did not hesitate to use the image of Schlingensief's long-term collaborators, many of whom have mental and/or physical handicaps. But in *Please Love Austria*, Schlingensief's refugee participants were barely visible, disguised in assorted wigs, hats, and sunglasses.¹⁶ In the square, the public had only a limited view of the immigrants through peepholes; the bulk of the performance was undertaken by Schlingensief himself, installed on the container's roof beneath the "Foreigners Out!" banner. Speaking through a megaphone, he incited the FPÖ to come and remove the banner (which they didn't), encouraged tour-

ists to take photographs, invited the public to air their views, and made contradictory claims ("This is a performance! This is the absolute truth!"), while parroting the most racist opinions and insults back to the crowd. As the various participants were evicted, Schlingensief provided a running commentary to the mob below: "It is a black man! Once again Austria has evicted a darkie!"

Although in retrospect—and particularly in Poet's film—it is evident that the work is a critique of xenophobia and its institutions, in Vienna the event (and Schlingensief's charismatic role as circus master) was ambiguous enough to receive approval and condemnation from all sides of the political spectrum. An elderly right-wing gentleman covered in medals gleefully found it to be in sympathy with his own ideas, while others claimed that by staging such a shameful spectacle Schlingensief himself was a dirty foreigner who ought to be deported. Left-wing student activists



attempted to sabotage the container and “liberate” the refugees, while assorted left-wing celebrities showed up to support the project, including Daniel Cohn-Bendit (a key figure from May ’68), and the Nobel Laureate author Elfriede Jelinek (who wrote and performed a puppet play with the asylum-seekers). In addition, large numbers of the public watched the program on webfreetv.com and voted for the eviction of particular refugees. The container prompted arguments and discussion—in the square surrounding it, in the print media, and on national television. The vehemence of response is palpable throughout the film, no more so than when Poet’s camera pans back from a heated argument to reveal the entire square full of agitated people in intense debate. One elderly woman was so infuriated by the project that she could only spit at Schlingensiefel the insult, “You ... artist!”

A frequently heard criticism of this work is that it did not change anyone’s opinion: the right-wing pensioner is still right-wing, the lefty protestors are still lefty, and so on. But this instrumentalized approach to critical judgment misunderstands the artistic force of Schlingensiefel’s intervention. The point is not about “conversion,” for this reduces the work of art to a question of propaganda. Rather, Schlingensiefel’s project draws attention to the contradictions of political discourse in Austria at that moment. The shocking fact is that Schlingensiefel’s container caused more public agitation and distress than the presence of a *real* deportation center a few miles outside Vienna. The disturbing lesson of *Please Love Austria* is that an *artistic* representation of detention has more power to attract dissensus than an *actual* institution of detention.¹⁷ In fact, Schlingensiefel’s model of “undemocratic” behavior corresponds precisely to “democracy” as practiced in reality. This contradiction is the core of Schlingensiefel’s artistic efficacy—and it is the reason why political conversion is not the primary goal of art, why artistic representations continue to have a potency that can be harnessed to disruptive ends, and why *Please Love Austria* is not (and should never be seen as) morally exemplary.

5. THE END OF PARTICIPATION

In his essay “The Uses of Democracy” (1992), Jacques Rancière notes that participation in what we normally refer to as democratic regimes is usually reduced to a question of filling up the spaces left empty by power. Genuine participation, he argues, is something different: the invention of an “unpredictable subject” who momentarily occupies the street, the factory, or the museum—rather than a fixed space of allocated participation whose counter-power is dependent on the dominant order.¹⁸ Setting aside the problematic idea of “genuine” participation (which takes us back to modernist oppositions between authentic and false culture), such a statement clearly pertains to *Please Love Austria*, and the better examples of social practice, which have frequently constituted a *critique* of participatory art, rather than upholding an unproblematized equation between artistic and political inclusion.

The fact that the Ladder of Participation culminates in “citizen control” is worth recalling here. At a certain point, art has to hand over to other institutions if social change is to be achieved: it is not enough to keep producing activist *art*. The historic avant-garde was always positioned in relation to an existent party politics (primarily communist) which removed the pressure of art ever being required to effectuate change in and of itself. Later, the postwar avant-gardes claimed openness as a radical refusal of organized politics—be this inter-war totalitarianism or the dogma of a party line. There was the potential to discover the highest artistic intensity in the everyday and the banal, which would serve a larger project of equality and anti-elitism. Since the 1990s, participatory art has often asserted a connection between user-generated content and democracy, but the frequent predictability of its results seem to be the consequence of lacking *both* a social *and* an artistic target; in other words, participatory art today stands without relation to an existing political project (only to a loosely defined anti-capitalism) and presents itself as oppositional to visual art by trying to side-step the question of visibility. As a consequence, these

artists have internalized a huge amount of pressure to bear the burden of devising new models of social and political organization—a task that they are not always best equipped to undertake.

My point, again, is not to criticize specific artists but to see the whole rise of social practice since 1989 as symptomatic. That the “political” and “critical” have become shibboleths of advanced art signals a lack of faith *both* in the intrinsic value of art as a de-alienating human endeavor (since art today is so intertwined with market systems globally) *and* in democratic political processes (in whose name so many injustices and barbarities are conducted).¹⁹ But rather than addressing this loss of faith by collapsing art and ethics together, the task today is to produce a viable international alignment of leftist political movements and a reassertion of art’s inventive forms of negation as valuable in their own right.²⁰ We need to recognize art as a form of experimental activity overlapping with the world, whose negativity may lend support towards a political project (without bearing the sole responsibility for devising and implementing it), and—more radically—we need to support the progressive transformation of existing institutions through the transversal encroachment of ideas whose boldness is related to (and at times greater than) that of artistic imagination.²¹

By using people as a medium, participatory art has always had a double ontological status: it is both an event in the world, and also at a remove from it. As such, it has the capacity to communicate on two levels—to participants and to spectators—the paradoxes that are repressed in everyday discourse, and to elicit perverse, disturbing, and pleasurable experiences that enlarge our capacity to imagine the world and our relations anew. But to reach the second level requires a mediating third term—an object, image, story, film, even a spectacle—that permits this experience to have a purchase on the public imaginary. Participatory art is not a privileged political medium, nor a ready-made solution to a society of the spectacle, but is as uncertain and precarious as democracy itself; neither are legitimated in

advance but need continually to be performed and tested in every specific context.

ENDNOTES

- Jacques Rancière, “Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art,” *Art & Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Summer 2008: 7.
- Jean Baudrillard, “The Precession of Simulacra,” in *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983): 84.
- Boris Groys, “Comrades of Time,” *e-flux journal*, December 11, 2009, available at www.e-flux.com
- Boris Groys, “Comrades of Time,” *e-flux journal*, December 11, 2009, available at www.e-flux.com (last accessed September 3, 2010).
- Tony Bennett phrases the same problem differently: art history as a bourgeois, idealist discipline is in permanent conflict with Marxism as an anti-bourgeois, materialist revolution in existing disciplines. There is no possibility of reconciling the two. See Tony Bennett, *Formalism and Marxism* (London: Methuen, 1979): 80–8.
- Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2005): 37–8.
- The implication of Boltanski and Chiapello’s book is that in the third spirit of capitalism, the artistic critique has held sway, resulting in an unsupervised capitalism that lacks the “invisible hand” of constraint that would guarantee protection, security and rights for workers.
- For a clear summary of “post-politics” see Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neo-liberal Fantasies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009): 13. She presents two positions: “post-politics as an ideal of consensus, inclusion, and administration that must be rejected” (Chantal Mouffe, Jacques Rancière) and “post-politics as a description of the contemporary exclusion or foreclosure of the political” (Slavoj Žižek).
- The difference between Gormley’s webstreaming and that of Christoph Schlingensiefel (discussed below) is that the latter is a conscious parody of reality TV’s banality, while the former uncritically replicates it. A press shot of Gormley with *American Idol*.
- Anthony Gormley, www.oneandother.co.uk (last accessed August 23, 2010).
- Charlotte Higgins, “The Birth of Twitter Art,” *Guardian*, July 8, 2009, available at www.guardian.co.uk (last accessed 28 August 2010).
- Jacques Rancière, “The Aesthetic Revolution and Its Outcomes: Employments of Autonomy and Heteronomy,” *New Left Review*, 14, March–April 2002: 133.
- Rancière, “Emancipated Spectator,” lecture in Frankfurt.
- Sherry Arnstein, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation,” *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35:4, July 1969: 216–24. The diagram has recently been the subject of some historical reassessment among architects and planners, reflecting the renewed interest in participation in this sector.
- See, for example, Dave Beech’s distinction between participation and collaboration. For Beech, participants are subject to the parameters of the artist’s project, while collaboration involves co-authorship and decisions over key structural features of the work; “collaborators have rights that are withheld from participants.” (Beech, “Include Me Out,” *Art Monthly*, April 2008: 3.) Although I would agree with his definitions, I would not translate them into a binding set of value judgements to be applied to works of art.
- Herbert Achternbusch, cited in Marion Löhndorf, “Christoph Schlingensiefel,” *Kunstforum*, 142, October 1998: 94–101, available at www.schlingensiefel.com (last accessed December 4, 2008).
- During their evictions, the asylum-seekers covered their faces with a newspaper, inverting the celebratory, attention-seeking exits of contestants from the *Big Brother* house. Rather than viewing this absence of identity as an assault on their subjectivity, we could see this as an artistic device to allow the asylum-seekers to be catalysts for discussion around immigration in general (rather than individual case studies for emotive journalism).
- Silvija Jestrović has explained this preference for the *performance* of asylum rather than its reality by way of reference to Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle*, specifically the epigraph by Feuerbach with which it opens: “But certainly for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, representation to reality, the appearance to essence ... illusion *only* is sacred, truth *profane*.” (Silvija Jestrović, “Performing Like an Asylum Seeker: Paradoxes of Hyper-Authenticity in Schlingensiefel’s *Please Love Austria*,” in Claire Bishop and Silvia Tramontana, eds., *Double Agent* (London: ICA, 2009): 61.
- Rancière argues that participation in democracy is a “mongrel” idea deriving from the conflation of two ideas: “the reformist idea of necessary mediations between the centre and the periphery, and the revolutionary idea of the permanent involvement of citizen-subjects in every domain.” (Jacques Rancière, “The Uses of Democracy,” in Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics* (London: Verso, 2007): 60.
- The Slovenian collective LRWIN has recently suggested that “critical” and “political” art are as necessary to neoliberalism as socialist realism was to the Soviet regime.
- A positive example of new developments is the new left organization Krytyka Polityczna in Poland, a publishing house that produces a magazine, organizes events, and maintains a regular, forceful presence in the media (via its charismatic young leader Sławomir Stawowski). The artists who have affiliated themselves with this project are as varied as Artur Mijewski and the painter Wilhelm Sasnal.
- Latin America has been pre-eminent in instituting such solutions. See for example the initiatives introduced by Antanas Mockus, then-mayor of Bogotá, discussed in Maria Cristina Caballero, “Academic turns city into a social experiment,” *Harvard University Gazette*, March 11, 2004, available at <http://www.news.harvard.edu>.

RETURNING ON BIKES: NOTES ON SOCIAL PRACTICE

MARIA LIND

If you were in Münster, Germany, in summer 1997, near the circular promenade, you likely bumped into people on red bikes, cycling in reverse. Early in the summer it would probably have been a tall young woman and, later on, a group heading down the asphalt trail. Perhaps you even joined them in this unusual activity, pedaling backward on a bicycle that was perfectly ordinary apart from its rear mirror, stabilizer, and extra cogwheels. Riding it required leaving your safety zone to unlearn the most commonplace skill that you probably learned as a child, in order to see the world from an unusual perspective.

This cycle club was Elin Wikström's *Returnity*, produced for Münster's Skulptur Projekte, a high-profile exhibition—international in scope—that marks art's postwar move beyond the walls of the art institution. Skulptur Projekte has occurred every ten years since 1977, filling Münster with both permanent and temporary projects that have peppered the city, primarily outdoors, with public sculpture. However, *Returnity* was unusually non-sculptural within the history and focus of the exhibition... it left no physical trace.¹ Instead, Wikström's cycle club, based on the voluntary participation of exhibition visitors as well as passersby, contributed to the legacy of what is now called "social practice," making an immaterial mark within and beyond the traditional parameters of "contemporary art."

The project did include physical elements, such as the nine bicycles and a circular clubhouse with an adjacent training track where return cyclists could congregate. But most significant was the number of cyclists, which Wikström recorded carefully, as per her practice of combining qualitative with pseudo-bureaucratic, quantitative information. With the help of another artist, Anna Brag, and an assistant, she provided individual instructions to two thousand people who attempted to ride the bikes. Approximately fifty became repeat participants. Some visitors even purchased a *Returnity* kit containing parts that could be mounted onto their own bikes at home.

It was no coincidence that this experiment with bikes took place in Münster: a city

of universities which grew around a medieval plan wherein driving a car is a nuisance. As a result, every inhabitant owns, statistically, two and a half bikes. Furthermore, in 1997, the average German was a member of no less than six to eight associations or clubs. *Returnity* alluded to local mobility patterns and social forms of organization, proving that an artwork can actually form a community (albeit temporarily) instead of simply "reaching out" to an existing one. The artist devised a framework within which participants could maneuver either individually or collectively, take part in a behavioral experiment, and—more existentially and ideologically than politically—raise consciousness. *Returnity* was a playful test that referenced lifelong learning, connectivity in a globalized world, and radically rethinking and deliberately disorienting one's naturalized behaviors.²

Arguably, *Returnity* was just another art project based on the social—on interaction between people—which provided an entertaining activity for locals and visitors alike. After all, it was commissioned by a body with interest in using art as an instrument to brand the city, generate income, and create new jobs. However, *Returnity* also occurred in a moment when social practice began to be simultaneously acknowledged and instrumentalized in various forms of mainstream exhibitions and other curated projects. Occasional precedents such as *Projet Unité* in Firminy, France (1993–94),³ *Sonsbeek* (1993)⁴ in Arnhem, Germany, *Places with A Past* at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina (1991),⁵ and *Culture in Action* in Chicago (1992–93)⁶ in the United States paved the way by focusing on site-specific commissions. Many of these can be described as social practice as we know it today.

A little-known curatorial project that stands out as a sensitive and smart predictor of things to come was *Services* (1993), initiated by artist Andrea Fraser and curator Helmut Draxler at the Kunstraum at the University of Lüneburg.⁷ *Services* was an activist and discursive project responding to the fact that artists were increasingly asked to



provide new work for specific situations, i.e. "projects," often with little or no pay, ensuing censorship, and unclear rights to the works. An ongoing forum, meetings, and an exhibition called "working-group exhibition" formed the core of the project in which artists such as Mark Dion, Louise Lawler, and Group Material participated. In addition to questioning art's function as a service, *Services* criticized art institutions' conservative views on the nature of exhibitions.

Even a quick glance reveals that social practice is as kaleidoscopic as it is contested as an artistic movement: it is simultaneously a medium, a method, and a genre. As a term, social practice can encompass everything from community art and activism – à la the Art Workers Coalition⁸ – to so-called relational aesthetics⁹ and kontextkunst.¹⁰ In between lie new genre public art¹¹ and connective aesthetics¹², dialogical art¹³ and participatory practices,¹⁴ as well as hybrids cutting across attempted definitions.¹⁵ They all look, taste, smell, and sound very different from one another. And yet social practice can loosely be described as art that involves more people than objects, whose horizon is social and political change—some would even claim that it is about making another world possible. Social practice concerns works with multiple faces turned in different directions—towards specific groups of people, political questions, policy problems, or artistic concerns; there is an aesthetic to organization, a composition to meetings, and choreography to events, as well as a lot of hands-on work with people. At the core of social practice is the urge to reformulate the traditional relationship between the work and the viewer, between production and consumption, sender and receiver. Furthermore, social practice tends to feel more at home outside traditional art institutions, though is not entirely foreign to them. Another way of phrasing this is to talk in terms of the collaborative turn in art—the genre as an umbrella for various methods such as collective work, cooperation, and collaboration.¹⁶

The development of social practice can also be understood in light of simultaneous

transformations within politics and management. Just as the dematerialization of the art object accompanied the dissolution of economic value through the end of the gold standard, artists also instrumentalized and reflected upon new forms of labor in the Western world post-World War II. Now, artists involved with social practice face the challenge of changing working conditions in a deregulated, post-Fordist job market, affected by an economy radically restructured by financial speculation and abstract values. In service and knowledge sectors, social competence, teamwork, and collaboration are essential, as are self-organization, flexibility and creativity, which all belong to the repertoire of the Romantic artist. In this sense, social practice work is very close to today's ideal of entrepreneurial work. Meanwhile, non-governmental organizations, interventions, and other support structures in the decolonized, developing world have engendered a volunteer sector. In all of this, participation has become a necessary and valued form of engagement, cherished by neoliberalism and Third Way politics alike.¹⁷ Architecture shares this thrust towards participation by underlining methods of participatory consulting and decision-making. In addition, as Western societies become more and more precarious, techniques such as these, used in the developing world, are now applied to projects at home.¹⁸

The invitation from Creative Time to write this text prompted me to reflect on what it has meant to engage with social practice work as a curator, for the past two decades—not with the intention of privileging this work over other artistic media, methods, or genres—at least not consciously. Rather, I've been interested in projects that relate to the surrounding world, practices that offer the most pertinent and challenging responses to moments, places, and issues, presented by artists I have worked with over time. These responses—both direct and oblique, poetic and agitprop—have had a place in my work alongside documentary, discursive, performative, and spatial practices, as well as abstraction's many incarnations.

An enduring criticism of social practice

is that it lends to “touch-down” projects that intervene only temporarily in a given situation—not unlike catastrophe relief. But some short-term, commissioned projects have also yielded long-term efforts. *Suggestion for the Day* by Apolonija Šušteršič¹⁹ began as part of an exhibition I curated in 2000 at Stockholm’s Moderna Museet, titled *What If: Art on the Verge of Architecture and Design*, which continued for four years with the support of various art and architecture institutions, such as Iaspis in Stockholm and the Architecture Museum of Ljubljana. Šušteršič, trained as both an architect and artist, invited stakeholders in urban development and institutional politics to join in a conversation about the future of Stockholm, a city known for its conservative urban and architectural approach. Like Wikström, Šušteršič stimulated public engagement by providing bicycles for the duration of the exhibition. Participants also received maps with commentary from emerging architects about contested areas in the city’s layout and design, and postcards with images of those sites so that visitors could locate them, pedal to them, and view the issues firsthand. Part of the debate on which the exhibition’s theme was based was the fact that Moderna Museet itself is located on an island, removed from the urban fabric. Šušteršič then organized a closed, moderated discussion within the exhibition space among commenting architects, city planners, developers, and two prominent local politicians—representatives who don’t normally encounter (let alone talk to) one another about urban issues. The audience mix resulted in lively, productive exchanges which could only have occurred within the context of art, primarily because such a diverse group would never have agreed to meet outside of a nonpolitical context. Eventually, the debate focused on the harbor area and its prospected extension.

Moderna Museet’s staff initially resisted *Suggestion for the Day* for pragmatic reasons: they simply weren’t accustomed to working with living artists, or organizing the production of new work. Another reservation often heard in relation to social practice is that opportuni-

ties for direct feedback are limited, outside of the comments generated by the participants—how then should the project be assessed? But even if bigger museums were hesitant to take on social practice projects, at least within their main venues, by year 2000, this kind of work had become a common component of most biennials. This proved especially true in shows that took place outside of the Western world, such as Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana, the Periferic Biennial in Iasi, and the Taipei Biennial. Meanwhile, artists themselves, as well as other non-institutional representatives, began organizing their own initiatives—often long-term, relationship-building efforts designed to contribute significantly to a particular context: *Park Fiction* in Hamburg, a multi-year campaign to transform an empty lot planned for an office development into a public park, as well as Dan Peterman’s *Blackstone Bicycle Works*, a youth education bike shop in Chicago, come to mind.

Sustained engagement also characterized Germany-based Schleuser.net (1998–2007). The word “Schleuser” means to transfer or take something through a hindrance like a lock or a border.²⁰ To that end, Schleuser.net, with artists Farida Heuck, Ralf Homann and Manuela Unverdorben at the helm, focused on border regimes. In 1993, the famous “Budapest Trial” criminalized “escape aid,” helping people flee the Eastern Bloc, which had previously been considered a venerable activity, post-WWII.²¹ Since then, migration had become a controversial issue in German politics on a local, regional, and national level, as well as across Europe. Modeled after a lobbying organization, Schleuser.net aimed to improve the media portrayal of “the men and women who engage in undocumented cross-border traffic.”

With the help of a realistic fiction, Schleuser.net set up an office, organized events, and displayed promotional material, including brochures and gadgets, in various locations, including a municipal administration building. They also employed billboards and exhibitions to communicate their message. The bland, corporate-looking, orange and blue design of their printed matter and website could easily be

SCHLEUSER

Trade Association for Smuggling People

NET



confused with that of a proper pressure group. This was not by chance: coming out of the German radical Left—Homann co-organized the pioneering “Freie Klasse” (Free Class) at the Munich Academy in the late 1980s—Schleuser.net participated in the widespread theatricalization of activism, while also consciously evoking play and parody.²² (Another related initiative that Homann co-founded was the activist project *Kein Mensch Ist Illegal*, or *No One Is Illegal*, which, since 1997, has fought for equal rights, regardless of whether or not the persons in question possess legal papers.)

When Schleuser.net was invited to participate in the group exhibition *Exchange & Transform (Arbeitstitel)*, which I curated at Munich’s Kunstverein München (2002), it was important to offer the group time and space to carry on their work in a concentrated way.²³ They moved their computers, phones, and files to the exhibition space, furnishing it with the elements of artist duo Bik van der Pol’s *Lobby*

Copy. Triggered by the Kunstverein’s unique location between the historic Hofgarten and the local government building, Schleuser.net produced new promotional material, and organized a month-long series of lectures which targeted politicians and journalists employing incorrect data related to undocumented border crossing. One of the lectures was a hands-on presentation by artist Heath Bunting about how to cross European borders without being documented. In another, historian Anne Klein presented her research on the Emergency Rescue Committee, which in 1940–42 smuggled and saved more than two thousand people from the south of France. Among the rescued were philosopher Hannah Arendt and artist Marc Chagall.²⁴

If *Suggestion for the Day* indicated an interest in institutional dilemmas and urban issues, and Schleuser.net exemplified collective endeavors as well as sustained engagement—all increasingly important features of

social practice—the *Lost Highway Expedition* (2006) testifies to the art world's intensified focus on research-based practices and transversal collaborations. However, these days, research does not necessarily occur in isolation, obscure archives, or remote libraries. Instead, like a flash mob with a clear purpose—to reframe “balkanization” as a window to Europe's future, rather than as an archaic and violent memory of its past—the *Lost Highway Expedition* explored for one month the never completed “Brotherhood and Unity Highway” in ex-Yugoslavia. The expedition also ventured to Albania.

Initiated by the architects Stealth and Kyong Park and the artist Marjetica Potrč, the *Lost Highway Expedition* brought nearly three hundred artists, architects, geographers, critics, and curators to cities along the route of the “Lost Highway” for events hosted by local organizations pertaining to recent urbanization, community politics, and cultural activities. The trip itself was entirely self-organized, with people traveling by car, bus, train, or bike—according to preference and budget. No one was required to commit to the entire journey, although some did. Having worked with Stealth in other contexts, I simply joined them at the first two stops in Ljubljana and Zagreb with my ten-month-old son, opting to take the train as our means of transportation. The expedition culminated in a host of projects, such as the creation of art works, texts, conferences, publications, collaborations, and networks. Among them are artist Kasper Akhøj's *Abstracta*, which relates the geopolitically fascinating story of a flexible display system common in Yugoslavia, as well as the publication of the *Lost Highway Expedition: Photobook*.²⁵

The desire and need to work long-term is felt in many corners of the art world, including social practice.²⁶ To that end, *Time/Bank*, by Julieta Aranda and Anton Vidokle, was designed to operate indefinitely. Based on the classical structure of a nineteenth-century time bank in which units of time are used as currency, this contemporary version allows individuals and groups to pool and trade skills. Different from potlatch and barter, where

goods and services are exchanged directly, *Time/Bank* uses an alternate currency, in the fashion of the “Ithaca HOUR” which has been traded in Ithaca, New York, since 1991. So far, *Time/Bank* has primarily concentrated on art world networks; consequently, many of the services on offer relate to what cultural producers do and need. Aranda and Vidokle have opened branches in physical spaces in Basel, den Hague and Frankfurt, accompanied by shops with objects for sale, including bicycles. They asked a number of artists to design prototypes for actual tender, and chose Lawrence Weiner's bill for printing.²⁷

As the director of Tensta Konsthall, I have invited Vidokle and Aranda to establish a branch of *Time/Bank* in Tensta, a suburb of Stockholm with approximately twenty thousand inhabitants. It is a geographically distinct neighborhood built in the late 1960s as part of a large late-Modernist housing scheme that was implemented across Sweden. Today, Tensta is a bedroom community with the most diverse concentration of nationalities in the country; because of this, many local business owners are already familiar with parallel economies. Tensta's unemployment rate is high and the average income low. Along with the senior high school, one of the best in the capital, and the local library, Tensta Konsthall serves as a rare stable entity in an otherwise transient area. The challenge here will be to sustain *Time/Bank* in this wide, yet tight, community where money has a different urgency.

Since the days of *Returnity*, social practice has developed its own unique gestures and orthodoxies, tensions and contradictions. In fact, a plethora of new education programs exclusively explore social practice.²⁸ Bringing the field into light now is neither to crown the genre “king of art,” nor to establish a cross-genre alternative canon. Rather, it is to consider projects and practices that do something significant in the moment, in palpable and/or symbolic ways, within a specific set of circumstances. It is obvious that not all social practice projects are interesting and relevant, just as all painting is not uninteresting and irrelevant. And yet, in spite of its increasing visibility,





social practice still mainly operates within the "minor" strands of the art world—as opposed to the spectacularized and consumption-oriented mainstream institutions of the "major" strand. These minors are self-organized initiatives, artistic and otherwise, as well as small-scale public institutions with precarious economies and they are the source of most of the new ideas in art.²⁹ Sharing certain features with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's "minor literature," written by members of a minority but using and corrupting the language of the majority (like Franz Kafka) in order to maintain maximum self-determination, the minors of the art world keep a calculated distance from the "majors."³⁰

Being slightly off-center can indeed often be an advantage. Today the minors, in general, and social practice, in particular, benefit from not yet having been subsumed by the majors. This is encouraging, as the work then can still offer the possibility of avoiding preconceptions about art production and direction, even if only for a moment. The questioning is ongoing, the process is rolling, and I keep waiting to one day see someone cycling down the street pedaling forwards, but going backwards.

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Opposite, top to bottom: Damir Nikšić delivers his performance on the Miljacka river as part of Lost Highway Expedition in Sarajevo (Photograph by Arnoud Schuurman). In Albania, Peter Lang discusses the editor's introduction of Lonely Planet's guidebook for the Western Balkans, which explains the difficulty for the editors in choosing the book's title over "former Yugoslavia" or "South East Europe" (Photograph by Kyong Park).

DEMOCRATIZING URBANIZATION AND THE SEARCH FOR A NEW CIVIC IMAGINATION

TEDDY CRUZ

THE SHRINKING RELEVANCY OF THE PUBLIC

The obvious is staring us—the public—in the face and, yet, we're ignoring it. We occupy a critical juncture in history, defined by unprecedented socio-economic, political, and environmental crises across any imaginable register. Our institutions of culture, governance, and urban development have atrophied, without knowing how to re-invent themselves, or construct alternative procedures to engage the conditions that have produced the crises in the first place.

How many Wall Street bailouts, foreclosures, superfluous debt ceiling debates, and tea-party zealots—amid the defunding of our public education system, and abandonment of healthcare and energy legislature—will it take to prompt our own spring revolution? The passivity of the American public and its creative sectors, in the context of this renewed return to excessive inequality and ideological polarization, makes clear that protests on par with those that occurred in Cairo's Tahrir Square will never happen in the US. Here, there is no state of emergency. We lack the kind of collective sense of urgency that would prompt us to fundamentally question our own ways of thinking and acting, and form new spaces of operation.

It is also obvious that we learned the best lesson in Democracy 101 from those Middle Eastern societies the American public was lead to believe were turban-wearing terrorists: Democracy is not simply the right to be left alone. Rather it is defined by the co-existence with others in space, a collective ethos, regardless of social media, that unconditionally stands for social rights. I do not mean to naively suggest that those revolutionary instances can be reproduced that easily; each cultural space has its own socio-political complexity. We have witnessed, for example, how specific geo-political configurations and historic power alliances have made it difficult to repeat Egypt's transformation in Syria, Bahrain and Libya. Nonetheless, the uncompromising collective act of seeking transformation of the stagnant status quo resonates, and should encourage our own self-critique.

Sufficient economic analysis of our current dilemma has shown the similarities between late 1920's depression-era conditions and our own situation today. Both socio-economic crises were characterized by the not-so-coincidental meeting of excessive inequality and low marginal tax rates: At these critical points, the income gap between the very wealthy and all other Americans reached record levels. In both 1928 and 2008 the top one percent averaged an income approximately 1,000 times higher than America's bottom 90 percent, while enjoying the lowest taxation available.

While the similarities are clear, there hasn't been enough discussion of the very different outcomes following both periods. In general, the post-depression years were marked by a self-assured consolidation of a collective political will to engage in public participation and public debate. Briefly, the political period following the depression witnessed the emergence of the New Deal and with it a commitment to invest in public infrastructure, education, and services partly enabled by higher marginal tax rates to the wealthy; in the 1950s, the marginal tax rate to the upperclass was 91 percent compared to 35 percent today, ultimately resulting in a few decades of more equitable distribution of economic and civic resources.

The economic and infrastructural growth experienced during that period of committed public spending clearly demonstrates that trickle-down economics, based on de-taxing the rich so that its wealth will eventually touch the rest of Americans, has been the fake democratic façade of neo-liberal models. This falsehood had forced us to believe and defend another one: the mythology of the American Dream as promised by an ownership society, low taxes, and individual freedoms that allow for unchecked economic expansion. Today, as the rich become richer in the middle of soaring unemployment rates, certain socio-economic realities, specific to the United States, reveal themselves. We are the only country in the world where the poor defend the rich, possibly with the belief that someday the American Dream will enable us all to be as wealthy. The

public ethos of this period also contradicts the conservative belief that social and economic strength depend on less government. Rather, they require an intelligent one, defined by responsible taxation, progressive public policy, and proactive collective imagination.

Our current period of crisis, then, has been defined by exactly the opposite. The absence of a self-assured political leadership and constructive debate of and about the public has allowed the public to be hijacked by right wing demagoguery that turns every socially based effort into a communist coup, co-opted by politics of fear. In fact, the very word "public" has become a liability, and therefore has taken on a negative connotation, even within our 'public,' political institutions; in fact, the way *public option* disappeared from Obama's Health Care Bill reflects this. Therefore, in my mind, different from the post-depression years, which enabled a healthy public debate and general accountability for the re-distribution of resources, our period has been characterized by a shrinking conception of the public and the consolidation of a powerful elite of individual or corporate wealth, which, in fact, has remained unaffected and unaccountable today.

From the time of Margaret Thatcher to Ronald Reagan's re-installment of pre-depression era free-market economic policies based on de-regulation and hyper excessive privatization of resources in the early 1980s, we have once more witnessed the ascendance of income inequality and social disparity that has yielded the current crisis. Equally obvious is that these typical neo-liberal economic models not only enabled a small elite to be in control of economic power but, this time, in control of political power as well, in unprecedented ways. What I am referring to is the philanthropic and lobbying machines sponsored by right wing foundations that have enabled this economic elite to own not only the bulk of resources but also the media and information networks that manipulate public opinion and the electorate. This consolidation of the economic and political power of this wealthy elite to lobby and install an anti-taxes, anti-immigration and anti-public culture in our time is

what makes our period radically different from the post depression era, cementing the final erosion of public participation from the political process and a culture of impunity in the upper echelons of institutional structures.

The ultimate impact of this consolidated economic and political hegemony can be illustrated in what I call the *Three Slaps on the Face of the American Public* since 2008. 1. After the big bubble of economic growth burst in September of 2008, the public unwantedly came to the rescue of the architects of the crisis by bailing out the banking industry (first slap). 2. Following this, the lack of collateral regulation to protect homeowners in the management of loan defaults resulted in millions of foreclosures, producing further insecurity and unprecedented unemployment rates (second slap). 3. Finally, the unfolding of this economic crisis and its political upheaval has recently enabled this conservative wealthy minority to de-fund the public with massive spending cuts on education, health, and social services without raising any taxes to the wealthy (third slap). So, we are now paralyzed, silently witnessing the most blatant politics of unaccountability, shrinking social and public institutions, and not a single proposal or action that suggests a different approach or arrangement.

So, ours is primarily a cultural crisis—rather than an economic or environmental one—resulting in the inability of institutions to question their ways of thinking, or the rigidity of their protocols and silos. It is within this radical context that we must question the role of art and humanities and their contingent cultural institutions of pedagogy, production, display, and distribution. A more functional relationship between art and the everyday is urgently needed, through which artists can act as interlocutors across this polarized territory, intervening in the debate itself and mediating new forms of acting and living.

In fact, one primary site of artistic intervention today is the gap itself that has been produced between cultural institutions and the public, instigating a new civic imagination and political will. It is not enough in our time to only give art the task of metaphorically reveal-





Flood:

*A Volunteer Network for Active
Participation in Healthcare*

Diluvio:

*Una Red de Voluntarios
para Participación Activa en el
Cuidado de Salud*

ing the very socio-economic histories and injustices that have produced these crises, but it is essential that art becomes an instrument to construct specific procedures that can transcend them. The revision of our own artistic procedures is essential today, expanded modes of practice to engage alternative sites of research and pedagogy, new conceptions of cultural and economic production and the re-organization of social relations seem more urgent than ever.

EXPANDING ARTISTIC PRACTICE: FROM CRITICAL DISTANCE TO CRITICAL PROXIMITY

The same ideological divide in politics today permeates art and architecture's current implicit debate. On one hand, we find those who continue to defend these two fields as a self-referential project of apolitical formalism, made of hyper-aesthetics for the sake of aesthetics, which continues to press the notion

of the avant-garde as an autonomous project, 'needing' a *critical distance* from the institutions to operate critically in the research of experimental form. On the other hand, we find those who need to step out of this autonomy in order to engage the socio-political and economic domains that have remained peripheral to the specializations of art and architecture, questioning our professions' powerlessness in the context of the world's most pressing current crises.

This need to expand the realm of established artistic practices is a direct result of our creative fields' unconditional love affair, in the last years, with a system of economic excess that was needed to legitimize artistic experimentation. These emerging activist practices seek, instead, for a project of *radical proximity* to the institutions, transforming them in order to produce new aesthetic categories that can problematize the relationship of the social, the

Above: Haha took over a vacated storefront on Greenleaf Street in Chicago, where they planted a hydroponic garden to provide produce for local AIDS and HIV patients (Photograph by Haha, Courtesy Sculpture Chicago).

political, and the formal.

In these practices, artists are responsible for imagining counter spatial procedures, and political and economic structures that can produce new modes of social encounters. Without altering the exclusionary policies that have produced the current crises in the first place, our professions will continue to be subordinated by visionless and homogeneous environments defined by the bottom-line of developers' spreadsheets as well as neo-conservative politics and economics of a hyper-individualistic ownership society. In essence, then, the autonomous role of artists needs to be coupled with the role of the activist. I don't see one as more important than the other because both are necessary today.

NEW SITES OF EXPERIMENTATION: AN URBANISM BEYOND THE PROPERTY LINE

The world's architecture intelligentsia—supported by the pre-2008 glamorous economy—flocked en masse to The Arab Emirates and China to help build dream castles that would catapult these enclaves of wealth as global epicentres of urban development. Yet many of these high-profile projects have only perpetuated the exhausted recipes of an oil hungry, U.S.-style globalization, camouflaging with hyper-aesthetics an architecture of exclusion based on urbanities of surveillance and control. Other than a few isolated architectural interventions whose images have been disseminated widely, no major ideas were advanced to transform existing paradigms of housing, infrastructure, and density.

While the world had been focused on those enclaves of abundance up until our current economic downturn, the most radical ideas advancing new models of urban development were produced in the margins, across Latin American cities. Challenging the neo-liberal urban logic of development, which is founded on top-down privatization, homogeneity and exclusion, visionary mayors in cities such as Porto Alegre, Curitiba, Bogota, and Medellin encouraged new public participation, civic culture, and unorthodox cross-institutional collaborations, rethinking the meaning of

infrastructure, housing, and density. I cannot think of any other continental region where we can find this type of collective effort led by municipal and federal governments seeking a new brand of progressive politics.

This suggests the need to reorient our focus to other sites of research and intervention, arguing that some of the most relevant practices and projects forwarding socio-economic sustainability will not emerge from sites of abundance but from sites of scarcity. New experimental practices of research and intervention will emerge from zones of conflict. It is in the periphery where conditions of social emergency are transforming our ways of thinking about urbanization.

RADICALIZING THE PARTICULAR: MOVING FROM THE AMBIGUITY OF THE PUBLIC TO THE SPECIFICITY OF RIGHTS

We need to move beyond the abstraction of the "global" in order to engage with the particularities of the political inscribed within local geographies of conflict. It is within this specificity where contemporary artistic practice needs to reposition itself in order to expose the particularity of hidden institutional histories, revealing the missing information that can allow us to piece together a more accurate anticipatory urban research and intervention. To be political in our field requires that we commit to revealing conditions of conflict and the institutional mechanisms that perpetuate them. What produced the crisis in the first place? Only knowing the specific conditions that produced it can enable us to think politically. In other words, artistic and architectural experimentation in our time should involve the specific re-organization of the political and economic conditions that continue to produce conflict between top-down forces of urbanization and bottom-up social and ecological networks, enclaves of mega wealth and sectors of marginalization. Conflict is a creative tool.

At this moment, it is not buildings, but the fundamental re-organization of socio-economic relations that is the necessary ground for producing new paradigms of democratization and urbanization. Artists and architects



have a role in the conceptualization of such new protocols, infiltrating into existing institutional mechanisms in order to reconstruct politics itself, not simply political art or architecture. It has been said that the Civil Rights movement in the United States began in a bus. At least that is the image that detonated the unfolding of such constitutional transformation. A small act trickling up into the collective's awareness. While public transport at the time was labeled "public," it wasn't actually accessible to all. To that end, it is necessary to move from the generality of the term "public" in our political debate to the specificity of rights to the city, and its neighborhoods. This would expand the idea that architects and artists, besides being producers of buildings and objects, can be designers of political processes, alternative economic models, and collaborations across institutions and jurisdictions. This can be in the form of small, incremental acts of retrofit of existing urban fabrics and regulation, encroaching into the privatization of public domain and infrastructure, as well as the rigidity of institutional thinking.

NEW URBAN PEDAGOGY: THE VISUALIZATION OF A NEW CIVIC IMAGINATION

Fundamental to the rethinking of exclusionary political and economic frameworks that defined the logics of uneven urban development in the last years is the translation and visualization of the socio-cultural and economic entrepreneurial intelligence embedded in many marginal, immigrant neighborhoods. While the global city had become the privileged site of consumption and display, marginal neighborhoods across the world remained sites of cultural production. But the hidden socio-economic value of these immigrant communities' informal transactions across bottom-up cultural production, economies and densities, continues to be off the radar of conventional top-down planning institutions.

If we consider citizenship as a creative act, it is new immigrants in the U.S. today who are pointing at a new conception of civic culture and a more inclusive city. In this context, I see informal urbanization as the site of a new interpretation of community, citizenship, and praxis, where emergent urban configurations

Above: Suzanne Lacy's *The Roof Is On Fire* operated as an outlet for Oakland teens to openly discuss pressing topics while an audience, including the local and national news media, listened in (Courtesy Suzanne Lacy).

produced out of social emergency suggest the performative role of individuals constructing their own spaces. The most radical urban interventions in our time have in fact emerged in marginal neighborhoods, as immigrants have been injecting informal economies and housing additions into mono-use parcels, implicitly proposing the urgent revision of current discriminating land-use policies that have perpetuated zoning as a punitive tool to prevent socialization, instead of a generative tool that organizes activity and economy.

But these immigrant communities' invisible urban praxis needs interpretation and representation; this is the space of intervention institutions of art, culture, and governance need to engage. How do we mobilize this activism into new spatial and economic infrastructures that benefit these 'communities of practice' in the long term, beyond the short-term problem solving of private developers or the institutions of charity?

But, often, just as artists and architects lack awareness of the specific political and social knowledge embedded within these marginal communities, community activists also lack the conceptual devices to enable their own everyday procedures, and how their neighborhood agency can trickle up to produce new institutional transformations. It is in the context of these conditions where a different role for art, architecture, environmental, and community activist practices can emerge. One that goes beyond the metaphorical representation of people, where only the community's symbolic image is amplified (what a community "looks" like) instead of its operative dimension (what a community "does"). New knowledge-exchange corridors can be produced, between the specialized knowledge of institutions and the ethical knowledge of "community," and artists can have a role to facilitate this exchange, occupying the gap between the visible and the invisible.

Questioning new forms of urban pedagogy is one of the most critical sites for artistic investigation and practice today, do we produce new interfaces with the public to raise awareness of the conditions that have pro-

duced environmental, economic and social crises? The conventional structures and protocols of academic institutions may be seen to be at odds with activist practices, which are, by their very nature, organic and extra-academic. Should activist practices challenge the pedagogical structures within the institution? Are new modes of teaching and learning called for?

Today, it is essential to reorient our gaze toward the drama embedded in the reality of the everyday and in doing so, engage the shifting socio-political and economic domains that have been ungraspable by art and design. It is not the "image" of the everyday and its metaphorical content that is at stake here, though. More than ever, we must engage the 'praxis' of the everyday, enabling functional relationships between individuals, as collectives, and their environments, as new critical interfaces between research, artistic intervention, and the production of the city.

MICROUTOPIAS: PUBLIC PRACTICE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

CAROL BECKER



“THE ESSENTIAL FUNCTION OF UTOPIA,” SAYS ERNST BLOCH TO THEODOR ADORNO, “IS A CRITIQUE OF WHAT IS PRESENT.”¹

There used to be a greater distinction between private and public. Private events—enactments of the particulars of personal life—took place in what was understood as the private sphere. Meanwhile, public events—the public engagement of public issues, such as politics—took place in the public sphere. Now, weighty discussions about public issues, as well as minute, private intimacies, are posted daily on social media sites. Those separations, which once seemed basic, clear, and reliable, now appear blurred.

While many have noted these changes, little understanding exists about the societal impact of such implosions and inversions in relationship to democracy. How are political affairs influenced when open engagement with public issues is increasingly missing from public discourse? And what about the effects of celebrity culture, in which topics that would have been considered narcissistic self-absorption at one time are now considered newsworthy, and glut the media? It appears that the private has colonized the public and, in fact, the concept of a “public” has all but disappeared—except perhaps as an epithet used by the right wing to reflect its scorn for what its adherents portray as an outdated, liberal notion of citizenship.

Just as nature most recently unleashed catastrophic earthquakes and tsunamis on our physical landscape, tectonic events have

rocked our political one, helping us to reimagine the meaning of public space and even the traditional notion of the public square. As Henri Lefebvre wrote, “Events belie forecasts. To the extent that events are historic, they upset calculations.”²

We watched transfixed and enthralled by the political upheaval in Egypt—a microutopian moment organized via cell phones and social media, such as Twitter, in an elaborately documented process that took years to manifest, including side trips to Serbia, for example, to learn best practices. But the final transformation occurred in real time and space in Tahrir (“Liberation”) Square, a public arena designed by French urban planner Baron Haussmann to simulate the Paris of Napoleon III. The physical reality of those prepared to stay in Tahrir Square until President Hosni Mubarak stepped down—a real-life, choreographed showdown—was so large in scale, duration, and imagination that it not only transformed Egypt, but continues to shake the region (Yemen, Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Libya) to very dramatic, exhilarating, and even devastating effect.

The events in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East demonstrated yet again that the Internet is a very effective organizing tool (used for good and bad). But it has not replaced human interaction and the manifestation of real resistance in public space which occurs when bodies are put on the line. No matter how

many digital petitions we sign, when real societal change occurs, it most often happens in a physical *location* where a mass of people congregates for an assignation. Even most voting requires that we physically show up at a designated place to cast our vote with the populace.

Egypt reconfirmed that we humans need the *agora*—the public square—as it existed in ancient Greece, a site where we come together physically, as bodies, in order to hear one another. We show force as a crowd—a purposeful mob, a *res publica*—with an expressed shared desire. In the architecture of traditional cities, one can usually find a place where the collective gathers, whether in Egypt's Tahrir Square, Athens' Syntagma Square, Washington's National Mall, Argentina's Plaza de Mayo, or Madison, Wisconsin's Capitol Square (which usually serves as the site of an excellent outdoor farmers' market when it is not a place of protest).

As social observers and cultural commentators who employ multiple forms and strategies to engage their audiences, artists are uniquely positioned to respond to social transformation and to educate communities about its complexity and implications. But now that more people are employing art forms to communicate, how can artists hope to make an impact in this sphere? And how can we think of such space as local when technology focuses our thoughts so profoundly on the global? Or is public space always local—defined by a particular group, who now affects its meaning from one society to the next in our increasingly interconnected world?

The challenge to navigate the tension between public and private realms is hardly new to artists. After all, museums, as well as other traditional art spaces, can be considered a kind of "public space," since these institutions are partly funded by both cities and states, or sit on park district land. Yet, they are specifically designed to feel private. In fact, we often enter museums expecting to experience something deeply personal—moments that are contrary to the disorder of our daily lives—despite the presence of others, who disrupt our sense of intimacy and ownership of the space.

So even when throngs surrounded Marina Abramović during the run of her piece *The Artist is Present* at the Museum of Modern Art in 2010, those participating in it expected a private moment. For this work, Abramović gave visitors the opportunity to sit facing her, quietly, for as long as they desired, while hundreds of other visitors watched. The performance was recorded on video, under blaring lights, and then posted on the Internet, where it would reside permanently for all to see. So how could this be a private experience? And yet it was. For many, this very public interaction with Abramović—who acted as both the artist and the art piece—was revelatory, contemplative, and emotional.

The more the Museum of Modern Art makes itself available for such encounters, the more the space is transformed into a performative space within which we, as viewers, collaborate with artists to fabricate our public/private experience. In the winter of 2011, Janine Antoni, at both the Hayward Gallery in London and the Haus der Kunst in Munich, surreptitiously placed a letter in visitors' checked bags. Antoni designed the mass-produced letter to look like a personal note, handwritten on a page ripped from a museum program. While some visitors assumed it was a love letter from another person, the notes were actually sent from an unspecified work of art—an imaginary act that generated a real object—extending the experience of the museum beyond the physical building, and highlighting the intimate, relational connection between art and spectator.

A number of artists have used these inversions of public/private to take on a new role and a new line of interrogation appropriate to this historical moment. Because artists often gravitate to what is missing, many have committed themselves to creating events that connect people and ideas in the public sphere because they discern that *what is missing* now is public discourse about the relationship of individuals to society. Artists also reconfigure contemporary physical or psychical elements into an imagined, ideal, hypothetical organization of reality. When they felt that the world

was too sanitized and our interior life was not respected, understood, or made visible, they wanted to bring those subjective issues into the public arena. Later, as this interiority became the norm, artists continued to focus on what was still silenced—for example, sexuality, gender, and transgender—the complex emotions and sociology of identity.

Now many artists fear that the world has become too interior-focused and that private space and identity are all there is, even in the public arena. Most significantly, those personal issues are rarely linked to the greater social context that could help frame them, isolate their origins, and catalyze their resolutions. As sociologist Zygmunt Bauman writes, "...Public Space is not much more than a giant screen on which private worries are projected without, in the course of magnification, ceasing to be private."³ Public confession has become the norm, as we regress to a shame-based society. "And so," adds Bauman, "public space is increasingly empty of public issues."⁴ As artists take on these contradictions, their actions are not necessarily intended to challenge the art worlds of galleries and museums but, rather, to help reinvigorate collectivity and connectivity throughout the larger world.

They do this through the creation of microutopic communities—small locations of utopian interaction. Utopia, from the Greek *utopos*, meaning "good place" (as opposed to *outopos*, meaning "no place"), is the creation of imaginary "good places" that do not exist on any map, other than that of the imagination. Such experiments attempt to create physical manifestations of an ideal "humanity" in an inhumane world—interventions in a world overrun by the spectacle. Even if their duration is brief, these interventions reflect the desire to give form to what Ernst Bloch might call "the not yet conscious," that which "anticipates" and "illuminates"⁵ what might be possible. And because utopian thinking is always communal, it has always historically implied the coming together of people within an imagined societal situation. (Therefore, you cannot have a utopia of one; an idealized experience with oneself would not qualify as "utopia" in the philosoph-

ical sense with which it has most often been employed.)

By asking her museum audience to sit with her in deep silence, Abramović created such a microutopian moment. Similarly, Tino Seghal, in *This Progress* at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, asked visitors to discuss the concept of "progress" with performers who greeted them as they walked up the ramps. As visitors approached the top of the museum, the age of the performers increased and the nature of the dialogue they initiated became less overtly philosophical and more narrative. These were interventions that engaged audiences in unexpected acts with an unspecified result.

Art is often a kind of dreaming the world into being, a transmutation of thought into material reality, and an affirmation that the physical world begins in the incorporeal—in ideas. Even Marx, the materialist, believed in the uniqueness of humans to imagine their world into being. He wrote that humans were better architects than bees and ants—the great builders of collective living—because they could see the plan before building it.⁶ In other words, we humans could "anticipate" what we would create.

Art is the great anticipator. It generates an "interpretation of that which is, in terms of that-which-is-not," as Rousseau might say.⁷ If one thinks that what exists is inevitable, then there is no space for art. This is why, in a very pragmatic society like the U.S., art is so often misunderstood. Yet, for that same reason, art is also so essential.

At this time, there is a collective understanding that, as John Muse wrote in an essay about Flash Mobs, "Everybody is an audience all the time."⁸ He adds, "Public spaces are more than ever becoming sites for communal isolation."⁹ Artists are both attempting to circumvent the spectacle and to reclaim urban space for the coming together of its inhabitants. They embrace diversity and resist the suburbanization of such space. But how *do* you bring people together to truly make a connection between them? Cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai asserts that the answer is microutopian. "We need to think of the biggest problems in the world," he has said, "and





come up with the smallest contribution toward their solution." It's a sentiment the artist Paul Ramírez Jonas has alluded to in work that has so often addressed both the interests, and the complexities, of the creation of "public."

What might we think of as the biggest problems and what might be the smallest solutions? Ramírez Jonas' 2010 Creative Time commission, *The Key to the City*, presented the following questions: How can we reclaim the centrality of citizenship as the most important element of society? How can keys to the city be available to all New Yorkers? And can this act of reclaiming the city be done in the most recognized public site of all—Times Square? According to written and spoken testimonies, the piece created a temporary community, as people waited to gift and to receive the keys. And it spread across the city, encouraging citizens to explore and experience greater access to one of the least intimate global cities in the world.

His newest piece, *The Commons*, is a heroic statue modeled after the bronze original of Marcus Aurelius atop his steed, located in the Campidoglio in Rome. But this horse has no rider, and it is made of cork, so that the public can use pushpins to leave notices for others, and watch it erode as the material deteriorates. The piece, which is ephemeral, collective, and historical, immediately reminded me of the *Polygonal Wall* in Delphi, where the ancient Greeks posted public messages in stone—the release of slaves by their owners, the amount of time a slave would stay after the decision of release, an inscription of gratitude to a benefactor, the record of a debt repaid. Private acts were recorded in the public sphere to last forever.

In Ramírez Jonas' act of creating the riderless horse, we have a perfect gesture for this historical moment. The unspecified rider—the completion of the heroic statue—can only be the public itself. Without the rider, the galloping horse has no clear direction, and without the public, the piece is incomplete. As Jacques Rancière would say, "The Spectator also acts..."¹⁰ Engagement is the only antidote to the spectacle. And the reinvention of public

space is the only antidote to its disappearance. Like Ramírez Jonas, artists have taken on the task of creating microutopian interventions that allow us to dream back the communities we fear we have lost.

Carol Becker first presented this piece as a lecture at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, April 28, 2011.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg, trans. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988): 12.
- 2 Henri Lefebvre, *The Explosion: Marxism and the French Upheaval*, Alfred Ehrenfeld, trans. (New York: Modern Reader Paperbacks, 1969): 7.
- 3 Zygmunt Bauman, *The Individualized Society* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2001): 107.
- 4 Ibid.: 108.
- 5 Jack Zipes, "Introduction: Toward a Realization of Anticipatory Illumination," Bloch, xxxi.
- 6 David Harvey, *A Companion to Marx's Capital* (London: Verso, 2010): 112.
- 7 Alain Martineau, *Herbert Marcuse's Utopia* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1986): 38.
- 8 John H. Muse, "Flash Mobs and the Diffusion of Audience," in *Theater*, 40:3, Tom Seller, ed. (New Haven: Yale School of Drama, 2010): 12.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, Gregory Elliott, trans. (London: Verso, 2009): 13.

EVENTWORK: THE FOURFOLD MATRIX OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

BRIAN HOLMES

Art into life: Is there any more persistent utopia in the history of vanguard expressions? Shedding its external forms, its inherited techniques, its specialized materials, art becomes a living gesture, rippling out across the sensible surface of humanity. It creates an ethos, a mythos, an intensely vibrant presence; it migrates from the pencil, the chisel or the brush into ways of doing and modes of being. From the German Romantics to the Beatnik poets, from the Dadaists to the Living Theater, this story has been told again and again, each time with a startling twist on the same underlying phrase. At stake is more than the search for stylistic renewal: it's about transforming your everyday existence.

Theory into revolution: The fundamental demand of the thinkers and rioters of May '68 was also "change life" (*changer la vie*). But from a revolutionary viewpoint, the consequences of intimate desire should be economic and structural. Situationist theory had no meaning without immediate communization. "Marx, Mao, Marcuse" was a slogan for the streets. The self-overcoming of art was understood as just one part of a program to vanquish class divides, transform labor relations and put alienated individuals back in touch with one another.

The '60s were full of wild fantasies and unrealized potentials; yet significant experiments were undertaken, with consequences extending up to the present. Campus radicalism gave new life to educational alternatives, resulting in large-scale initiatives like the University Without Walls in the United States or the Open University in Britain. The counter-cultural use of hand-held video cameras led to radical media projects like Paper Tiger Television, Deep Dish TV and Indymedia. Politics itself went through a metamorphosis: autonomous Marxism gave rise to self-organized projects all across Europe, while affinity groups based on Quaker conceptions of direct democracy took deep root in the USA, structuring the anti-nuclear movement, becoming professionalized in the NGOs of the '80s, then surging back at full anarchist force in Seattle. From the AIDS movements onwards, activism

regained urgency and seriousness, grappling with concrete and progressively more complex issues such as globalization and climate change. Yet society still tends to absorb the transformations, to neutralize the inventions. The question is not how to aestheticize "living as form," in order to display the results for contemplation in a museum. The question is how to change the forms in which we are living.

Social movements are vehicles for this metamorphosis. At times they generate historic events, like the occupation of public squares that unfolded across the world in 2011. Through the stoppage of "business as usual" they alter life-paths, shift labor routines and career horizons along with laws and governments, and contribute to long-lasting philosophical and affective transfigurations. Yet despite their historic dimensions, the sources of social movements are intimate, aspirational: they grow out of small groups, they crystallize around what Guattari called "non-discursive, pathic knowledge."¹ Their capacity for sparking change is widely coveted in our era. Micro-movements in the form of trends, fashions and crazes are continually ignited, channeled and fueled by PR strategists, in order to instrumentalize the upwelling of social desire. Still grassroots groups, vanguard projects and intentional communities continue to take their own lives as raw material, inventing alternate futures and hoping to generate models, possibilities and tools for others.

Absorbing all this historical experience, social movements have expanded to include at least four dimensions. Critical research is fundamental to today's movements, which are always at grips with complex legal, scientific and economic problems. Participatory art is vital to any group taking its issues to the streets, because it stresses a commitment to both representation and lived experience. Networked communications and strategies of mass-media penetration are another characteristic of contemporary movements, because ideas and directly embodied struggles just disappear without a megaphone. Finally, social movement politics consists in the collaborative coordination or "self-organization"



of this whole set of practices, gathering forces, orchestrating efforts and helping to unleash events and to deal with their consequences. These different strands interweave, condense into gestures and events, then disperse again, creating the dynamics of the movement. A fourfold matrix replaces any single, easily definable initiative.

No doubt the complexity of this fourfold process explains the rarity of effective interventionism. But that's the challenge of political engagement. What has to be grasped, if we want to renew our democratic culture, is the convergence of art, theory, media and politics into a mobile force that oversteps the limits of any professional sphere or disciplinary field, while still drawing on their knowledge and technical capacities. This essay tries to develop a concept for the fourfold matrix of contem-

porary social movements. The name I propose for it is *eventwork*.

But wait a minute—if we're talking grassroots activism, why insist on complexity? Why even mention the disciplines and the professions? The reason is that the grassroots has gone urban and suburban and rurban, and it's *us*: the precarious middle-class subjects of contemporary capitalist societies, which are based on knowledge, technology and communication. Our disciplines create these societies. Our professions seem only able to maintain them as they are. The point is to explore how we can *act*, and what role art, theory, media and self-organization can have in effective forms of intervention.

Like the sociologist Ulrich Beck in his book *The Risk Society*, I think the movement outside the modernist institutions has been

made necessary by the failure of those institutions to respond to the dangers created by modernization itself.² The dangers of modernization grew clearer at the close of the postwar period, when the Keynesian-Fordist mode of capitalist development revealed its inherent links with inequality, war, ecological destruction and the repression of minorities. It became apparent that not only “hard” science, but also the social sciences and humanities were helping to produce the problems; yet nothing in their internal criteria of truth or legitimacy or professional success could restrain them. The most conscious and articulate exponents of each of the separated disciplines then felt the need to develop a critique of their own field, and to merge that critique into an attempt at social transformation. Only in this way could they find an immanent response to the sources of their own alienation.³

So there is a paradox of eventwork: it starts from within the disciplines whose limits it seeks to overcome. In this text I’ll start with the internal contradictions of avant-garde art in the late ’60s, and with the attempt by one group of Latin American artists to go beyond them. With that narrative as a backdrop, I’ll sketch out the emergence of an expanded realm of activism in the post-Fordist era, from the ’70s up to now. The aim is to discover some basic ideas that could change the way each of us conceives the relations between our daily life, our politics, and our discipline or profession.

In this movement, certain truisms will run up against their shortfalls. What I want to make clear is that despite their rhetorical attractions, the twin formulas of “art into life” and “theory into revolution” are too simplistic to describe the pathways that lead people beyond their professional and institutional limits. The failure to describe those paths with the right mix of urgency and complexity leads to the bromides of “relational art” (intimacy on display in a sterile white cube) or the radical chic of “critical theory” (revolution for sale in an academic bookstore). Through their weakness and emptiness, these failures of cultural critique provoke reactionary calls for a return

to the modernist disciplines (as when we are enjoined to restrict artistic practice to some version of “pure form”). The result is a disjunction from the present and a lingering state of collective paralysis: which is the most striking characteristic of left politics today, at least in the United States.

As living conditions deteriorate in the capitalist democracies, one pressing question is how artists, intellectuals, media makers and political organizers can come together to help change the course of collective existence. The answer lies in a move across institutional boundaries and modernist norms. Each of the separated disciplines needs to define the paradox of eventwork—and thereby open up a place for itself, beyond itself, in the fourfold matrix of contemporary social movements.

HISTORY

Let’s go straight to the most impressive example of eventwork in the late ’60s, which unfolds not in New York or London or Paris, but in Argentina. This was the moment of the country’s industrial take-off, when an expanding middle class enjoyed close links to cultural developments in the metropolitan centers. In capitalist societies, utopian longings often accompany periods of economic growth: because the abundance of material and symbolic production promises real use values. But since mid-1966 Argentina was under the grip of a military dictatorship, which repressed individual freedoms and imposed brutal programs of economic rationalization. Under these conditions, a circle of self-consciously “vanguard” artists in Buenos Aires and Rosario began to sense the futility of the rapid cycles of formal innovation that had marked the decade of pop, op, happenings, minimalism, performance and conceptualism. They became keenly aware that inventions designed to shatter bourgeois norms were being used as signs of prestige and intellectual superiority by the elites, to the point where, as León Ferrari wrote, “the culture created by the artist becomes his enemy.”⁴ Therefore, these artists began an increasingly violent break with the gallery and museum circuits that had formerly sustained their prac-

tices, using transgressive works, actions and declarations to curtail their own participation in officially sanctioned shows.

By mid-summer of 1968 they decided to organize an independent congress, the "First National Meeting on Avant-Garde Art." The goal was to define their autonomy from the elite cultural system, to formulate their social ideal—a Guevarist revolution—and to plan the realization of a work that would embody their aims.⁵ In this work, the aesthetic material, as Ferrari explained, would no longer be articulated according to formal innovations, but instead with clearly referential and immediately graspable "meanings" (*significados*) which themselves would be subjected to transgressive profanation, in order to generate a powerful denunciation of existing social conditions. Echoing Ferrari's approach in the language of semiotics and information theory, another contributor to the meeting, Nicolás Rosa, insisted that "the work is experimental when it proceeds to the *rupture of the cultural model*." This rupture was, to be frank, direct and irreversible, enacted in a visual, verbal and gestural language that would allow anyone to participate. It would also be disseminated in the mass media. Situated outside the elite institutions and linked to the social context of its realization, the work would "produce an effect similar to that of political action," in the words of the artist Juan Pablo Renzi, who had drafted the framing text for the meeting. And because "ideological statements are easily absorbed," Renzi continued, the revolutionary work "transforms the ideology into a real event from within its own structure." Such was the theoretical program that led to *Tucumán Arde*, or "Tucumán is Burning."

What was meant by the title? The group sought to denounce the process of restructuring that had been imposed on the sugar industry in the province of Tucumán, resulting in widespread unemployment and hunger for the workers. Beyond Tucumán itself, they wanted to reveal the larger program of economic rationalization being carried by the national bourgeoisie under dictatorial command, in line with US and European interests. To do so would require

the production of "counter-information" on the strictly semiotic level, using factual analysis to oppose the government propaganda campaign that surrounded the restructuring. So the artists collaborated with students, professors, filmmakers, photographers, journalists and a left-wing union, engaging in a covert fact-finding mission which they disguised as a traditional cultural project. In the course of two trips they visited fields and factories, circulated questionnaires, interviewed, filmed and photographed workers and their families, putting their preliminary analysis to the test of experience. This on-site research was the first phase of the project, culminating in a press conference where they ripped the veil from their activities and explained the real purpose of their work, hoping—in vain, as it turned out—to raise a scandal and push their messages out into the mass media.

An effective denunciation would also require the production of what the artists called an "over-informational circuit" (*circuito sobreinformacional*) which would operate on the perceptual level, in order to overcome the persuasive power of the official propaganda both quantitatively and qualitatively.⁶ For the second phase they formulated a multilayered exhibition strategy, beginning with teaser campaigns that introduced potential publics to the words "Tucumán" and "Tucumán Arde" through posters, playbills, cinema screens and graffiti interventions. They then created two multimedia exhibitions in union halls in Rosario and Buenos Aires, attempting in both cases to use not a single room but the entire building. They deployed press clippings and images from the government propaganda campaign and contrasted these to economic and public-health statistics as well as diagrams indicating the links between industrial interests, local and national officials and foreign capital. They displayed documentary photographs, projected films, delivered speeches and circulated a critical study prepared by the collaborating sociologists. At roughly half-hour intervals the lights were cut, dramatizing the kinds of infrastructural failures that were typically endured by people in the provinces. Bitter coffee was

Opposite: The exhibition, titled both "Tucumán Arde" and "First Avant Garde Art Biennial," took place in the CGT union in Rosario, Argentina, and had an opening night attendance of more than 1,000 people. To market the exhibition, the collective used street publicity in the form of graffiti and posters with the simple slogan "Tucumán Arde." (Courtesy Graciela Carnevale)



served to give the public a taste of the hunger affecting a cane-growing region where food, and sugar itself, was in chronically short supply.

The exhibition strategy was a success. The opening in Rosario on November 3 attracted over a thousand people on the first night, resulting in a prolongation of the show for two weeks instead of one. It was restaged in Buenos Aires on November 25, this time including the covertly produced "Third Cinema" film, *La Hora de los Hornos* (The Hour of the Furnaces, 1968), by Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas, whose projection was halted every half hour for immediate discussion. The level of courage implied by this process, under conditions of military rule, is difficult to imagine. The show in Buenos Aires was censored on its second day by threats against the union, exposing the repressive character of the regime and inviting a further radicalization of the country's cultural producers.

Because of its collective organization, its experimental nature, its investigatory process, its tight articulation of analytic and aesthetic means, its oppositional stance and its untimely closure, *Tucumán Arde* has become something of a myth in Argentina and abroad. The American critic Lucy Lippard, who would later be active in the Art Workers Coalition, repeatedly claimed that she had been radicalized by her meeting with members of the group on a visit to Argentina in October 1968.⁷ The French journal *Robho* devoted a dossier to the work in 1971, emphasizing its break with bourgeois art and its revolutionary potentials. In its more recent reception, which has included a large number of shows and articles from the late 1990s on, the project has been linked to "global conceptualism," and to an interventionist form of media art based on semiotic analysis.⁸ This attention from the museum world testifies to an intense public interest in a process that emphasized common speech, direct action and a break with bourgeois cultural forms. But that same attention opens up the questions of absorption, banalization, neutralization. In the most thoroughly documented analysis, the Argentine art historian

Ana Longoni vindicates the aims of the project by asking the obvious disciplinary question: "Where's the vanguard art in *Tucumán Arde*?" She responds: "If *Tucumán Arde* can be confused with a political act, it is because it *was* a political act. The artists had realized a work that extended the limits of art to zones that did not correspond, that were external."⁹

So what was achieved by the move to these zones external to art? At a time when institutional channels were blocked and the modernizing process had become a dictatorial nightmare, the project was able to orchestrate the efforts of a broad division of cultural labor, capable of analyzing complex social phenomena. It then disseminated the results of this labor through the expressive practices of an event, in order to produce awareness and contribute to active resistance. What results is a change in the finality, or indeed the use-value, of cultural production. As one statement indicates, the project was conceived "to help make possible the creation of an *alternative culture* that can form part of the revolutionary process."¹⁰ Or as the *Robho* dossier put it: "The extra imagination found in *Tucumán Arde*, if compared for example to the usual agitation campaign, comes expressly from a practice of, and a preliminary reflection on, the notions of event, participation and proliferation of the aesthetic experience."¹¹ That's a perfect definition of eventwork.

Its effectiveness comes from a perceptual, analytic and expressive collaboration, which lends an affective charge to the interpretation of a real-world situation. Such work is capable of touching people, of involving them, not through a retreat to the exalted dreamland of a white cube, but instead within the everyday complexity of life in a technocratic society, where the most elusive possibility is that of shared resistance to the vast, encroaching programs of government and industry. My question is how to extend that resistance into the present, how to make it last past each singular event. Graciela Carnevale, who preserved this archive of materials at great risk throughout the Videla dictatorship, said this to me in a conversation: "There is always a great difficul-

ty in how to transmit this experience or make it perceptible, beyond the information about it."¹² Her dilemma is that of everyone who has been involved in a significant social movement: "How to share an experience that produced such great transformations in oneself?"

ACTUALITY

The four vectors of eventwork converge into action beneath the pressure of injustice and the anguishing awareness of risk, in situations where your own discipline, profession or institution proves incapable of responding, so that some other course of action must be taken. "I don't know what to do but I'm gonna do it," as my comrades in the Ne Pas Plier collective used to say. Activism is the making-common of a desire and a resolve to change the forms of living, under uncertain conditions, without any guarantees. When this desire and resolve can be shared, the intensive assemblage of a social movement brings both the agonistic and the utopian dimension into daily experience, into leisure hours, passionate relations, the home, the bed, your dreams. It brings public responsibility into private passion. That's living as political form.

Of course it's not supposed to be that way in modern society, where an institution exists, in theory at least, to address every need or problem. Experts manage risks on government time; artists produce the highest sublimations of entertainment; the media respond faithfully to popular demands for information; and social movements are the disciplined actions of organized laborers seeking higher wages, all beneath the watchful eye of professional politicians. That's the theory, anyway. This functional division of industrial society reached its peak of democratic legitimacy in the decades after WWII, when the Keynesian-Fordist welfare state claimed to achieve stable growth, income equality and social benefits for an expanding "middle class," which included unionized factory laborers alongside a broad range of university-trained technicians, service providers and managers. What revealed itself in 1968 and afterwards, however, was not just the inability of the industrial state to

go on delivering the goods for that expanding middle class. What revealed itself, with particular intensity inside the educational and cultural circuits made possible by economic growth, was a shared awareness that the theory doesn't work, and that despite its supposedly corrective institutions, capitalist modernization itself produces conditions of gendered and racialized exploitation, neocolonial expropriation, mental and emotional manipulation and ever-worsening environmental pollution.

The sense of a threat lodged within the utopian promises of Keynesian social democracy and Fordist industrial modernization was a major motivator for the emergence of the so-called "new social movements," which could not be reduced to workplace bargaining demands and which could not be adequately conceived within the frameworks of traditional class analysis. In these movements, to the dismay of an older and more doctrinaire political generation, issues of alienation and therefore of identity began coming ineluctably to the fore.¹³ The people involved in the civil rights and antiwar campaigns, and then in a far wider range of struggles, had to bring new causes, arenas and strategies of action into some kind of alignment with thorny questions of perception knowledge, communication, motivation, identity, trust, and even self-analysis, all of which became only more acute as immediate material necessity receded in the consumer societies. Artistic expression now appeared as a necessarily ambiguous mediator between personal conviction and public representation. The intersections of theory and daily life became more dense and entangled, with the result that each movement, or even each campaign, turned into something original and surprising, the momentary public crystallization of a singular group process. The simultaneous inadequacy and necessity of this way of doing politics has come to define the entire period of post-Fordism: it is *our* actuality, our present tense, at least from a progressive-left perspective. If an intervention like *Tucumán Arde* can still appear familiar, in its modes of organization and operation if not in its ideologies and revolutionary horizons, it's because the basic

sets of objective and subjective problems underlying it are still very much with us today.

The similarities and the differences will come into focus if we think back on one of the most influential social movements of the post-Fordist period, which is AIDS activism. I wasn't part of that movement and I can't bear witness to its intensities. But what's impressive from a distance is the collective reaction to a situation of extreme risk, where the issue is not so much the technical capacity as the *willingness* of a democratic society to respond to dangers that weigh disproportionately on stigmatized minorities. Rather than widespread police and military repression, as under a dictatorship, it is the perception of an intimate threat that lays the basis for militant action. A totalizing ideological framework like Marxism can no longer be counted on to structure this perception. Instead, subjectivity and daily experience become crucial. The questions of who you are, who others think you are, what rights you are accorded and what rights you are ready to demand, are all life or death issues, felt and spontaneously expressed before being formulated and represented. A recent book called *Moving Politics* makes clear how much these affective dimensions mattered, after a threshold of indignation had been crossed and grief could be transformed into anger.¹⁴ At the micro level, the "event" could be a glance or a tear in private, a gesture or a speech in a meeting, no less than a public action or a media intervention. All these are ways to elicit and modulate affects, which mobilize activist groups while exerting a powerful force on others, whether friends or strangers, elected officials or anonymous spectators.

Yet indignation and rage, along with solidarity and love for fellow human beings, can only be the immediate foundations of a social movement. Critical research, symbolic expression, media and self-organization were the operative vectors for AIDS activism, just as they had been for a vanguard project like *Tucumán Arde*. At first the issues themselves had to be defined, and they were highly complex, involving the social rights to fund or instigate certain lines of research, to legalize or

ingest certain kinds of medications, to receive or dispense certain kinds of publicly supported care. Scientific and legal investigations, often performed by AIDS sufferers, were an essential part of this effort.¹⁵ At the same time it became apparent that the rights to treatment and care were dependent not only on scientific and legal arguments, but also on the ways that risk groups were represented in the media, and on the ways that politicians monitored, solicited or encouraged those representations, so as to advance their own policies and ensure their own re-election.¹⁶ The struggle had to be brought into the fields of education and cultural production, whose influence on the structures of feeling and belief should not be underestimated. But at the same time, it had to reach into the mass media. This breakthrough to the media required the staging of striking events on the ground, often with resources borrowed from visual art and performance. And all that entailed the coordination of a far-flung division of labor under more-or-less anarchic conditions, where there could be no director, no hierarchy, no flow chart, etc. To give some insight into this complex interweave of AIDS activism, I'd like to quote the art critic and activist Douglas Crimp, in an interview with Tina Takemoto:

Crimp: Within ACT UP, there was a sophistication about the uses of representation for activist politics. This awareness came not only from people who knew art theory but also from people who worked in public relations, design, and advertising... So ACT UP was a weird hybrid of traditional leftist politics, innovative postmodern theory, and access to professional resources... One of the most emblematic images associated with ACT UP was the SILENCE=DEATH logo, composed of a simple pink triangle on a black background with white sans serif type. This image was created by a group of gay designers who organized the Silence=Death Project before ACT UP even started. Although they didn't



design the logo for ACT UP, they lent it to the movement, and it was used on T-shirts as an official emblem.¹⁷

Here again, what lends resonance to the event is the difference of the people involved, and therefore of the techniques and knowledges they are able to bring to bear, whenever they find the inspiration or the need or the courage to overstep their disciplinary boundaries and start to work at odds with the dominant functions. That all of this should only become possible under the menace of illness and the direct threat of death is, I think, of the essence: it's not something one should avoid or shirk away from. Social movements arise and spread in the face of existential threats. What's at issue then, in our blinkered and controlled and self-satisfied societies, is the perception of a threat and the modulation of affect in the face of it—or in other words, the way you rupture a cultural pattern, the way you motivate yourself and others to undertake a course of action. This paradoxical figure of a social solidarity founded on an experience of rupture brings us

back to the larger, trans-generational question of eventwork, exactly as Graciela Carnevale expressed it: "How to share an experience that produced such great transformations in oneself?"

Speaking from my own experience, I've also participated in a large movement, or really a constellation of social movements, the global justice movements opposing financially driven globalization. Starting around 1994 they arose across the earth: in Mexico, India, France, Britain, the US, etc. From the beginning these movements interacted very extensively, first through labor, NGO and anarchist networks, then in counter-summits mounted in the face of the transnational institutions such as the WTO and the IMF, then through the veritable popular universities constituted by the World Social Forums. The people I worked with, mainly in Europe but also in the Americas, were able to twist or subvert some of the utopian energies of the Internet boom, combining them with labor struggles, ecological movements and indigenous demands to create a political response to corporate global-



ization. In the course of these movements, the relations between critical and philosophical investigation, artistic processes, direct action and tactical media opened up a vast new field of practice, more vital than anything I had previously known. The Argentine insurrection of December 2001 was a culminating moment of this global cycle of struggles; and for those involved with art, not only the history but also the actuality of social movements in Argentina seemed to confirm the idea that aesthetic activity could be placed into a new framework, one that was no longer freighted with the strict separations of the modernist institutions.¹⁸ All this convinced me that contemporary art in its most challenging and experimental forms has indeed been suffering from the "cultural confinement" that Robert Smithson diagnosed long ago, and that its real possibilities unfold on more engaging terrains, whose access has mostly been foreclosed by the institutional frameworks of museums, galleries, magazines, university departments, etc.¹⁹ The concept of eventwork is based directly on these experiences with contemporary social movements, which have generated important cooperative and communicational capacities and helped to revitalize left political culture.

It's obvious, however, that the global justice movements were not able to overturn the ruling consensus on capitalist development and economic growth. In fact the recent financial crisis has both vindicated the arguments we began making as much as fifteen years ago, and also shown those arguments to be politically powerless, incapable of contributing to any concrete change. A similar verdict was delivered to environmental activists by the debacle of the Copenhagen climate summit.

All of that fits into a larger pattern. If I had to offer a one-sentence version of what I've learned about society since 1994, it might go like this: "The entire edifice of speculative, computer-managed, gentrifying, militarized, over-polluted, just-in-time, debt-driven neo-liberal globalization has taken form, since the early '80s, as a way to block the institutional changes that were first set into motion by the new social movements of the '60s-'70s."

In other words, cultural confinement does not just affect experimental art, as Smithson seems to have believed. Instead it applies to all egalitarian, emancipatory and ecological aspirations in the post-Fordist period, which now reveals itself to be a period of pure crisis management, one that has not produced any fundamental solutions to the problems of industrial modernization, but has only exported them across the earth. Yet those problems are serious, they have accumulated on every level. What's the use of aesthetics if you don't have eyes to see? It would not be a metaphor to say that the United States, in particular, has been living on credit since the outset of the post-Fordist period; and now, slowly but inexorably, the bill is coming due.

PERSPECTIVES

The question I've tried to raise is this: how do cultural practices become political acts? Or to put it more sharply: how does the operative force of a cultural activity, or indeed of a discipline, somehow break through the normative and legal limits imposed by a profession? How to create an institutional context that offers a chance of mutual recognition and validation for people attempting to give their particular skills and practices a broader meaning and a greater effectiveness?

These questions can be framed, in an inversing mirror, by an image from the wave of protest that swept over the state of Wisconsin in the face of Governor Scott Walker's ultimately successful bid to impose an austerity plan that includes an end to the right of collective bargaining. The image is a protest snap from someone's digital camera, reproduced widely on the web.²⁰ It shows a middle-class white woman standing in front of an American flag, next to a Beaux-Arts statue. She holds a sign in her hands that says in bold capital letters:

I AM NOT REPLACEABLE
I AM PROFESSIONAL

Who is this woman? An artist? A curator? An art historian? A cultural critic? Why does she proclaim her security in this way? Does

she still have a job? Does she still have rights? And how about ourselves? Where do our rights come from? How are they maintained? How are they produced?

It seems to me that in the United States right now, as in other countries, there is a rising feeling of existential threat. Endless warfare, invasive surveillance, economic precariousness, intensified exploitation of the environment, increasing corruption: all these mark the entry into an era of global tension whose like has not been seen since the 1930s. As economic collapse continues and climate change becomes more acute, these dangers will become far more concrete; and we urgently need to prepare for the moments when adherence to a social movement becomes inevitable. Yet it appears that laws, ethical codes and the requirements of professionalism in all-absorbing, highly competitive careers, still make it impossible for most Americans to find the time, the place, the medium, the format, the desire and above all the collective will that would help them to resist the threats. This reminds us of what Thoreau taught in his time, namely that being a citizen of a democratic country means always being on the edge of starting a revolution. Something about our forms of living and working has to change, not just aesthetically and not just in theory, but pragmatically, in terms of the kinds of activity and their modes of organization.²¹ Or as Doug Ashford once put it, "Civil disobedience is an art history, too."²²

This essay was written in the summer of 2011, while major social movements continued to unfold across Europe and the Middle East, and a dead calm weighed on the U.S. As we go to press, the game has changed. Hundreds of thousands of people across the country have taken to the streets, set up encampments in public squares, and are activating all the social, intellectual, and cultural resources at their disposal in order to carry out a deep and searching critique of inequality. Alongside organizers, researchers, and media activists, artists have played a role, which continues to expand as more people overstep the boundaries of their disciplinary identities. Social movements come

in great waves, generating unpredictable consequences: no one knows what this one will leave behind. But the inspiration of Wisconsin has been fulfilled and its paradoxes have been overcome. Floating above crowds across the country, a very different sign could be seen, pointing to what now appears to be a precarious destiny:

LOST A JOB, FOUND AN OCCUPATION

ENDNOTES

- 1 Félix Cuatrecasas, *Chaosmosis: an Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (Indiana University Press, 1995): 28.
- 2 Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage, 1992, 1st German edition 1986).
- 3 The most striking example of this self-critique in the social sciences is the reaction of anthropologists to their discipline's participation in the Vietnam War; see for example Dell Hymes, ed., *Reinventing Anthropology* (New York: Random House, 1972).
- 4 León Ferrari, "The Art of Meanings" (1968) in Inés Katzenstein, ed., *Listen Here Now! Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avante-Garde* (New York: MoMA, 2004): 312.
- 5 Four typescripts of texts delivered at this meeting are preserved in the archive of Craciela Carnevale; they are the sources for this paragraph. Three of them (including the one by León Ferrari quoted above) are translated in *Listen Here Now!* *ibid.*: 306–18; the fourth, by Nicolás Rosa, is reproduced in Spanish in Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, *Del Di Tella a "Tucumán Arde": Vanguardia artística y política en el 68 argentino* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2008): 174–78.
- 6 See María Teresa Cramuglio and Nicolás Rosa, "Tucumán Arde" (1968), declaration circulated at the Rosario exhibition, reproduced in *Del Di Tella a Tucumán Arde*, *ibid.*: 233–35. The text is translated under the title "Tucuman Burns" in Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, eds., *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999): 76–79; but *circuito sobreinformacional* is rendered as "informational circuit," losing a crucial emphasis.
- 7 Concerning Lippard's visit to Argentina and her declarations, see Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009): 132–38.
- 8 See Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America, 1960–1980," in Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver and Rachel Weiss, eds., *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin: 1950s–1980s*, (New York: Queens Museum of Modern Art, 1999) and Alex Alberro, "A Media Art: Conceptual Art in Latin America," in Michael Newman and Jon Bird, eds., *Rewriting Conceptual Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999). Another important book is Andrea Ciunta, *Avant-Garde, Internationalism, and Politics: Argentine Art in the Sixties* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). Among major exhibitions featuring the archive of *Tucumán Arde* are *Global Conceptualism* (Queens, 1999) *Ex Argentina* (Berlin, 2003); *Documenta 12* (Kassel, 2007); and *Forms of Resistance* (Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2007–2008). A copy of the archive of *Tucumán Arde* has been acquired by the MacBa in Barcelona.
- 9 Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, *Del Di Tella a Tucumán Arde*: 216.
- 10 "Frente a los acontecimientos políticos....," unsigned document in the archive of Craciela Carnevale (2 pages), apparently a sketch for a broadside to be distributed at the Rosario exhibition.
- 11 "Dossier Argentine: Les fils de Marx et de Mondrian," *Robho* no. 5–6, Paris, 1971: 16.
- 12 Conversation with Craciela Carnevale, Rosario, Argentina, April 11, 2011.
- 13 For the concept of "new social movements" and a review of the most prominent theories about them, see Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 2d edition (London: Blackwell, 2006): chap. 1.
- 14 Deborah B. Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and Act Up's Fight against AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
- 15 See Steven Epstein, *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).
- 16 See Douglas Crimp, ed., *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988).
- 17 Tina Takemoto, "The Melancholia of AIDS: Interview with Douglas Crimp," *Art Journal*, Vol. 62, No. 4 (Winter, 2003): 83.
- 18 For the role of artists in Argentine social movements, see Brian Holmes, "Remember the Present: Representations of Crisis in Argentina, in *Escape the Overcode: Artistic Activism in the Control Society* (WHW: Van Abbemuseum, Zagreb and Eindhoven, 2009); also available at <http://brianholmes.wordpress.com/2007/04/28/remember-the-present>. For a book that literally attempts to rewrite the history of contemporary art on the basis of *Tucumán Arde*, see Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2007).
- 19 Robert Smithson, "Cultural Confinement" (1972), in Nancy Holt, ed. *The Writings of Robert Smithson* (New York: NYU Press, 1979).
- 20 See among many other blogs and websites, <http://thepragmaticprogressive.org/wp/2011/02/19/a-letter-from-a-union-maid-in-wisconsin> (accessed 07/11/11).
- 21 This is exactly the conclusion of Dan S. Wang and Nicolas Lampert, "Wisconsin's Lost Strike Moment," at http://www.justseeds.org/blog/2011/04/wisconsin_lost_strike_moment_1.html.
- 22 Doug Ashford and 36 others, *Who Cares* (New York: Creative Time Books, 2006): 29.

LIVING TAKES MANY FORMS

SHANNON JACKSON

“THE POWER OF THESE THEATERS SPRINGING UP THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY LIES IN THE FACT THAT THEY KNOW WHAT THEY WANT THEY INTEND TO REMAKE A SOCIAL STRUCTURE WITHOUT THE HELP OF MONEY—AND THIS AMBITION ALONE INVESTS THEIR UNDERTAKING WITH A CERTAIN MARLOWESQUE MADNESS.”¹

This was Hallie Flanagan, director of the Federal Theatre Project (FTP), one part of the Works Progress Administration that was so central to implementing Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal. She was recalling her work as the leader of a federally supported theatrical movement charged with responding to the reality of the Great Depression. The Federal Theatre Project addressed timely themes with new plays that dramatized issues of housing, the privatization of utilities, agricultural labor, unemployment, racial and religious intolerance, and more. And the FTP devised innovative theatrical forms—staging newspapers, developing montage stagecraft, and opening the same play simultaneously in several cities at once. The goal was to extend the theatrical event to foreground the systemic connectedness of the issues endured. Social and economic hardships were not singular problems but collective ones; as such, they needed a collective aesthetic. Like other Works Progress Administration (WPA) culture workers—its

writers, its mural painters, its photographers—FTP artists used interdependent art forms as vehicles for reimagining the interdependency of social beings. They gave public form to public life.

As we think about the twenty years of work represented in *Living as Form*, we should also remember prior histories of socially engaged art, such as the Federal Theatre Project. To do so is to remember that now is not the first time an international financial crisis threatened to imperil the vitality of civic cultures; it is also to acknowledge that the effects of economic crises and economic prosperity vary, depending upon what global, demographic position one occupies. From Saint Petersburg, Russia to Harare, Zimbabwe, from Los Angeles, California to Glover, Vermont, booms and busts have been socially produced and differentially felt. Accordingly, artists dispersed among different global sites face unique and complex economies as they develop cultural responses

to social questions around education, public welfare, urban life, immigration, environmentalism, gender and racial equity, human rights, and democratic governance. Those economies are now distinctively “mixed” in our “post-1989” era, less fueled by the Cold War’s capitalism/communism opposition than by Third Way experimentation whose allegiances to public culture are as opaque and variable as its allegiances to public services.² As artists reflect upon these and other social transformations, they also reckon with the mixed socioeconomic models that support art itself. Artists based in Europe can still seek national arts funding, but groups such as The Mobile Academy or Free Class Frankfurt might worry about the encroachment of neoliberal models that chip away at the principles behind it. Public sector funding interfaces with other financial models. Some artists seek commissions, and others depend on royalties. Others sell documentation of socially engaged work in galleries, joining the likes of Phil Collins, Thomas Hirschhorn, Paul Chan, or Francis Alÿs whose political practices enjoy art world cachet. Still other artists such as Mierle Laderman Ukeles or Rick Lowe mobilize social sector initiatives in service of the arts, transforming after-school programs, public sanitation, or urban recovery projects into aesthetic acts. Finally, people like Josh Greene sidestep larger systemic processes, choosing to develop micro-DIY networks of shared artistic support instead. But whether you are organizing potlucks to combat the effects of Turkey’s Deep State, responding to a coalition government’s equivocal faith in the culture industries of the United Kingdom, or celebrating the release from social realism by speculating in China’s booming art market, there is no pure position for socially engaged artmaking.

To recall the Federal Theatre Project inside of the WPA is not only to prompt reflection on changing socioeconomic contexts, but also to reflect upon the varied art forms from which social engagement springs. The WPA expanded the practice of photographers, architects, easel painters, actors, designers, dancers,

and writers, and the *Living as Form* archive includes practices that measure their expansion from other art forms as well. The installations of Phil Collins sit next to the community theater of Cornerstone. The choreography of Urban Bush Women moves near the expanded photography of Ala Plástica.

But even if the WPA moment is a reminder that socially engaged work develops from a range of art traditions, the willingness to capture the heterogeneity of contemporary work is striking and unfortunately rare. Across the world, artists and institutions celebrate “hybrid” work. However, such hybrid artists still measure their distance from traditional art disciplines, and their conversations and support networks often remain circumscribed by them. In other words, expanded theater artists talk to other expanded theater artists and are presented by an international festival circuit. Post-visual artists talk to other post-visual artists and are represented in the biennial circuit and by the gallery-collector system. The habits of criticism reinforce this inertia, routinely structuring who is cast as post-Brechtian and who is cast as post-Minimalist. It is hard to find contexts that enable conversation across these networks using critical vocabularies. Certainly, the difficulty is due in part to the wide range of skills new art forms require. Not everyone knows how to design a house or produce a film. Not everyone can fabricate a three-story puppet to be graceful or inscribe African diasporic history in a simple rotation of the hips; so it makes sense when architects, videographers, puppeteers, and choreographers seek out conversations with fellow specialists. But the necessity of creating platforms that stitch together the heterogeneous project of socially engaged art remains—and continues to become increasingly urgent. Meanwhile, genuinely cross-disciplinary artists should not have to cultivate some talents and repress others in order to conform to particular legitimating contexts. It would be nice, for instance, if Theaster Gates did not have to choose between standing in a gospel choir or sitting at his potter’s wheel.



Thus, the challenge of *Living as Form* lies in its invitation to contemplate what living means in our contemporary moment, and to reckon with the many kinds of forms that help us to reflect. That challenge is itself embedded in different barometers for gauging aesthetic integrity and social efficacy. The question of art's social role has been a hallmark of Western twentieth-century aesthetic debate—whether sociality is marked by eruptions at Café Voltaire or by the activism of 1968, whether it is called Constructivist or Situationist, realist or relational, functional or (after Adorno) “committed.”³ Russia’s Chto Delat’s renewal of Lenin’s historic question, “What is to be done?” is both an earnest call and a gesture that renders the question an artifact by asking what “doing” could possibly mean in a twenty-first century global context. Their pursuit resonates with that of choreographer Bill T. Jones who finds himself recalibrating his sense of the role of

politics in art. “I now choose to fire back that ‘political’ is an exhausted term and most certainly more and more irrelevant in regard to my work. To make a work that says, ‘War is bad!’ is absurd. I find myself saying with growing confidence that the works that I make now are concerned with moral choice, as in, ‘What is the right thing to do, particularly when we seem to have many choices and no real choice at all?’”⁴

Even if ethical and pragmatic questions of “doing” activate contemporary art, modernist legacies of thought and practice carry forward habits of enthusiasm and suspicion. Those habits determine whether work is deemed subversive or instrumentalized—whether it looks efficacious or like “the end of art.” Artist groups such as Alternate Roots are quite clear in their desire to craft aesthetic solutions to social problems. Meanwhile, Hannah Hurtzig’s The Mobile Academy worries more about the



ossification of goal-driven “knowledge,” ironically hoping to create “a tool to find problems for already existing solutions.”⁵ To some, Cornerstone Theater’s mission statement provides necessary inspiration: “We value art that is contemporary, community-specific, responsive, multi-lingual, innovative, challenging, and joyful. We value theater that directly reflects the audience. We value the artist in everyone.”⁶ To others, such a “mission” risks social prescription. These critical tussles depend upon how each receiver understands the place of art. Should art mobilize the world or continually question the reality principles behind its formation? Should art unsettle the bonds of social life or seek to bind social beings to each other? Acts of aesthetic *affirmation* coincide with equally necessary acts of aesthetic *refusal*. But as we come to terms with hybrid forms of socially engaged art, no doubt every citizen will find herself jostled between competing and often contradictory associations that celebrate and reject varied

visions of the “social.” This is a matter of what we used to call “taste,” a regime of sensibility that we like to pretend we have overcome. Nevertheless, our impulses to describe a work as ironic or earnest, elitist or as literal, critical or sentimental show that many of us have emotional as well as conceptual investments in certain barometers for gauging aesthetic intervention and aesthetic corruption. Such differences will also affect how each of us assesses the role of functionality, utility, and intelligibility in a socially engaged work. Jeremy Deller’s reenactments in “The Battle of Orgreave” may look radically functional to some of us and curiously useless to others. On the other hand, Francis Alÿs’ works may seem strangely unintelligible to one group but overly didactic to another.

Reactions to socially engaged art thus renew historic questions around the perceived autonomy and heteronomy of art, whether it should be “self-governing” or commit to governance

by "external rules." As many have argued, that opposition always cracks under pressure. Arguments in favor of aesthetic autonomy disavow their enmeshment in privatized art markets. Arguments in favor of aesthetic heteronomy backtrack when "the artist's freedom of speech" seems threatened. But as specious as the opposition is, questions of perceived aesthetic autonomy and heteronomy affect our relative tolerance for the goals, skills, and styles of different art forms. The legacy of anti-theatrical discourses in modernist art criticism offers a case in point. Many signature Minimalist gestures purportedly laid the groundwork for contemporary social engagement: for example, the turn to time-based work, the entry of the body of the artist, the explicit relation to the beholder, the avowal of the spatial and institutional conditions of production.⁷ Such gestures were criticized in their time for being "theatrical," and arguably the pejorative connotations of that term linger in the many criticisms and defenses of the formal properties of social practice now. However, such a discourse was less potent for artists who actually worked in theater and other performing arts, people for whom time, bodies, space, and audience were already incorporated into the traditions of the medium. Thus, for socially engaged theater producers and choreographers, the effort was not to introduce such properties—they were already there—but to alter the conventions by which such properties were managed. It meant that time might not be narrative, that bodies might not be characters, and that space could exceed the boundaries of the proscenium. It meant that people like Augusto Boal would seek to dynamize the audience relation into a new kind of "spect-actor."⁸

If we then bring work that derives from theatrical, visual, architectural, textual, and filmic art forms under the umbrella of "socially engaged art," it seems important to register their different barometers for gauging skill, goal, style, and innovation. We might call this the "medium-specificity" of social engagement. The performing bodies of political theater may not be traditional characters, but to a sculptor, they still appear to be acting. The

installation art piece may exceed the constraints of the picture frame, but to an environmental theater producer, it still appears relatively hermetic. Postdramatic theater may be non-narrative, but to a post-visual artist, it looks exceedingly referential. In other words, our enmeshment in certain art forms will affect how we perceive tradition and innovation in a work. It will also affect how we understand its social reach, its functionality, and its relative intelligibility. What reads as earnest to a Conceptual artist will look snobby to a community organizer. Heteronomous engagement in one art form looks highly autonomous to another. But the harder work comes in a willingness to think past these initial judgment calls. Who is to say that the feminist content of Suzanne Lacy's projects on rape prevents them from getting formal credit for being a "Happening"? Who is to say that there isn't a radical refusal of social convention in Cornerstone's notion that there is "an artist in everyone?" Finally, the cultural location of specific artists will influence their definitions of what qualifies as social. I am reminded of Urban Bush Women founder Jawole Willa Jo Zollar's reflections on the subject: "I don't know that I could make a work that is not about healing. What would that be about? Being? Well, you know, it's interesting, a European director said to me ... you know, your work is old-fashioned because you have this obsession with hope ... and I said, you know the values in my community that I have also internalized are that. So no, it's not about nihilism for me or this train-spotting angst. No, that's not my culture. So it can be corny to you. That's fine."⁹

Once we develop a tolerance for different ways of mixing artistic Forms, however, we can get to the inspiring work of seeing how they each address the problems and possibilities of Living. The Works Progress Administration—like other instances of public, nonprofit, and privately funded efforts at civic culture—knew something about the making of life. At a time of fiscal danger, the arts were not positioned as ornamental and expendable, but as central vehicles for reimagining the social order. Existing economic and social structures did not



remain intact, contracting and expanding with the decrease or increase in financial flows. Instead, it was a time when various social sectors underwent redefinition and engaged in significant cross-training. Sectors in the arts, health care, housing, commerce, urban planning, sanitation, education, science, and child development received joint provisions that required collaboration. It meant health policy, advanced educational policy, and cultural policy, all in the same moment. It meant that citizens were not asked to choose between supporting employment programs or supporting arts programs, as both sectors were reimagined together. In theater, journalists became playwrights, WPA laborers became actors, and public utility companies hung the lights. But this interdependent social imagining was not without its own dangers, especially when such forms of imagining were retroactively cast as politically corrupt. The statement from Hallie

Flanagan that opened this essay was quoted when she was brought before the Dies Committee who argued that her directorship of an arts-based American relief program had been, in fact, un-American. "You are quoting from this Marlowe," noted Dies Committee member Joe Starnes. "Is he a communist?"¹⁰

The history lesson shows the potential and peril of coordinating public forms of aesthetic inquiry. Funny how acts of citizenship suddenly become unpatriotic once under the rubric of art. In our contemporary moment, we tend to use the word "neoliberal" to describe moral regimes based on highly individuated and market-driven measures for determining value. And the ease with which the privatized financial crisis of 2008 transmogrified into a national and global distrust of public systems shows how robust the psychic as well as financial investment in neoliberalism actually is. I thus find myself emboldened by artists who

continue to renew our understanding of what cross-sector collaboration can be, even if they also remind us that it is hard to do. Mierle Laderman Ukeles has worked across the domains of art and public sanitation for decades, but her artist-in-residence position remains unpaid. Moreover, as Rick Lowe reminds us, cross-sector collaboration means re-skilling: "I have to keep trying to allow myself the courage to do it, you know, because as we open ourselves up and look around, there are many opportunities to invest that creativity. But it's challenging. Oftentimes, as an artist, you're trespassing into different zones.... Oftentimes... I know nothing. I have to force myself and find courage to trespass. ... Artists can license ourselves to explore in any way imaginable. The challenge is having the courage to carry it through."¹¹ It is of course in that trespassing that art makes different zones of the social available for critical reflection. Cross-sector engagement exposes and complicates our awareness of the systems and processes that coordinate and sustain social life. For my own part, this is where social art becomes rigorous, conceptual, and formal. The non-monumental gestures of such public art works address, mimic, subvert, and redefine public processes, provoking us to reflect upon what kinds of forms—be they aesthetic, social, economic, or governmental—we want to sustain a life worth living. Whether occupying an abandoned building, casting new figures as public sector workers, or rearranging the gestural gait of the street, such aesthetic projects embed and rework the infrastructures of the social. This is where the notion that living has a form gains traction. Living here is not the emptied, convivial party of the relational. Nor is it the romantically unmediated notion of "life" whose generalized spontaneity Boomers still elegize. By reminding us that living is form, these works remind us of the responsibility for creating and recreating the conditions of life. Form here is both socially urgent and a task for an aesthetic imaginary. Living does not just "happen," but is, in fact, actively produced.

In the end, the stakes of maintaining a robust and bracing public culture are too dear for us not to cultivate awareness and respect

for the many ways that fellow artists contribute to the effort. Our conceptions of expanded art need to stay expansive. In *Living as Form* we find a tool to help us widen awareness. It is a tool that invites discussion of what form might mean. It is a tool that invites discussion of what living could mean—for future occupants of a world full of potential and in need of repair.

ENDNOTES

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- 4 Bill T. Jones, "'Political' Work?," (October 4, 2006) at www.billtjones.org/billsblog/2006/10/political_work.htm.
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- 6 Cornerstone Theater, Mission and Values, <http://www.cornerstonetheater.org/> (July 2011).
- 7 Once again, the conversation around Minimalism and theatricality is a long one, but see for instance, Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum* (June 1967); James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Hal Foster, "The Grux of Minimalism," in *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).
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- 9 Jawole Willa Jo Zollar quoted in Nadine George-Graves, *Urban Bush Women: Twenty Years of African American Dance Theater, Community Engagement, and Working it Out*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010): 204.
- 10 This story is oft-recounted. See, for instance, Roy Rosenzweig and Barbara Melosh, "Government and the Arts: Voices from the New Deal Era," *The Journal of American History* (September 1990): 596; Ted Morgan, *Reds: McCarthyism in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Random House, 2003): 198.
- 11 Greg Sholette, "Activism as Art: Shotgun Shacks Saved Through Art-Based Revitalization: Interview with Rick Lowe," *Huffington Post* (November 22, 2010).

PROJECTS

AI WEIWEI

FAIRYTALE: 1,001 CHINESE VISITORS

2007

For his contribution to Documenta 12 in Kassel, Germany, artist Ai Weiwei brought to town 1,001 residents of China during the well-known art fair. With \$4.14 million from funding sources such as Documenta's sponsors, three Swiss foundations, as well as the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ai arranged all aspects of travel. He paid for airfare, processed visa applications, refurbished an old textile mill into a temporary hostel, transported Chinese chefs to cook meals, designed travel items such as clothing and luggage, and organized tours of Kassel's landmarks. He also installed 1,001 antique chairs throughout the exhibition pavilion to represent the Chinese participants' presence in Kassel. His visitors acted as both tourists and subjects of his art—viewers of a foreign culture, as well as signs of another.

Within three days of advertising the free trip on his blog, Ai received 3,000 applications. He privileged those with limited resources or travel restrictions; for example, women from a farming village, who lacked proper identity cards, were able to obtain government-issued travel documents for the first time. Other participants included laid-off workers, police officers, children, street vendors, students, farmers, and artists. They arrived *en masse*. However, Ai solicited their individual voices through filmed interviews with each traveler, and also a lengthy questionnaire—99 questions—that focused on personal histories, desires, and fantasies.

Kassel is best known as home to the Brothers Grimm, famed collectors of fables from the region. Ai named his project *Fairytale* in reference to their tales, and as a nod to the spirit of the trip, which likely felt mythical to many of the tourists, who had perhaps never before dreamed of leaving China.



Top to bottom: Video stills from Ai's *Fairytale* show the Chinese visitors partaking in Documenta 12 (Courtesy Ai Weiwei).



when a group of 1001 Chinese arrive in
a city with a population of 220,000.

ALA PLÁSTICA MAGDALENA OIL SPILL

1999–2003

A month after a Shell Oil tank and a German ship collided in Argentina's Rio de la Plata, artists Silvina Babich and Alejandro Meitin began walking along the damaged coast, photographing stained, drenched birds, and pools of indigo liquid collected in buckets and marshes along the riverbank. Over 5,300 tons of oil spilled into the fresh water estuary, which is close to the town Magdalena and the Parque Costero del Sur, a wildlife refuge considered a biosphere reserve by UNESCO. Babich and Meitin collaborate under the name Ala Plástica; working together as envi-

ronmental activists, they produced photographs, notes, and other documentation—from satellite imagery to maps—to build a case for both repair to the ecosystem and reparations to the community. "We [wanted to] reclaim the strip of land Shell was trying to close down," says Meitin, an artist and lawyer, "and inform people about what was really happening in that place."

Since 1991, Ala Plástica has worked with artists, environmentalists, government agencies, and scientists to study rivers in Argentina. For this project, the group organized a team of researchers that included *junqueros* (reed harvesters), scientists, naturalists, journalists, activists, and other artists to weigh in on the impact, prescribe solutions for aggressive clean-up measures, and present their findings in local and global forums. In 2002, in collaboration with other lobbying groups such as Friends of the Earth and Global Community Monitor, they co-wrote "Failing the Challenge, The Other Shell Report," and presented it to Annual Shareholders Assembly of the company in London. In that same year, the country's Supreme Court ruled in favor of a \$35 million cleanup of the river's coastline.



Above: This image, *Last Reed Harvest*, documents the impacts of the oil spill on the human and natural communities of Magdalena, Argentina (Photograph by Rafael Santos).



Top to bottom: Reed harvesters speak to members of the community in Magdalena about the Shell oil spill (Photograph by Thomas Minich). The group surveys damage along Río de la Plata's coastline caused by the Shell oil spill (Photograph by Fernando Massobrio).

JENNIFER ALLORA AND GUILLERMO CALZADILLA

TIZA (LIMA)

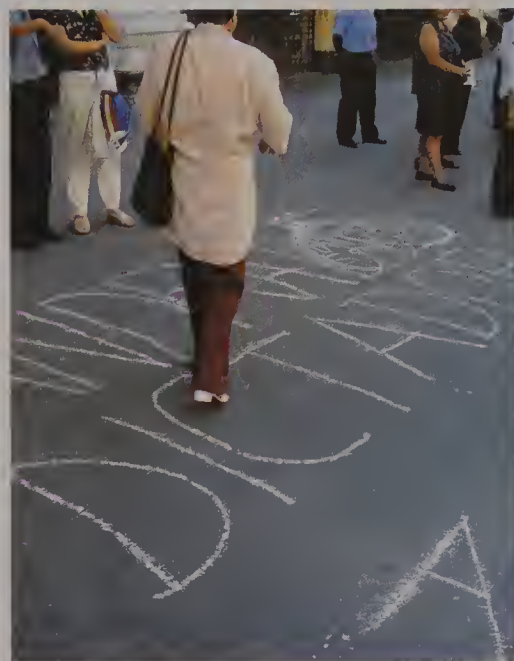
1998–2006

Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla placed twelve five-foot columns of chalk in public squares in Lima, Paris, and New York, ephemeral public monuments that would crumble and dissolve over time into smaller pieces and pools of liquid. The artists then invited people to use the fallen pieces of chalk to write messages on the ground, doodle, or express themselves in any fashion they chose, thereby transforming the material decay into a fleeting opportunity for creative expression. In Lima, Allora and Calzadilla placed the chalk columns directly in front of government offices, which incited passersby to convert the ad-

jacent ground into a large, makeshift blackboard overflowing with messages intended to critique the state. This activity evolved into an impromptu, peaceful protest as people gathered in the square, waving banners and hoisting posters above their heads. Eventually, military officers, who were standing by in shields and helmets, confiscated the chalk, and washed away the incendiary political statements.

Puerto Rico-based Allora and Calzadilla represented the United States in this year's Venice Biennale—the first performance artists, and artist collaborative, to do so. Since the late 1990s, the artists have often explored the act of mark making, and the ways in which temporary actions can yield permanent effects. For their *Land Mark* series, the artists worked with activists on the Puerto Rican island Vieques to consider how land is marked, literally and figuratively, and by whom. For decades, the U.S. military practiced bombing and tested chemical warfare technologies in the area, while protesters would break into the range to disrupt activity. Allora and Calzadilla provided them with rubber shoes that would imprint the ground as they ran across the range, thereby leaving behind a reminder of their fleeting act of civil disobedience.





Opposite. As the chalk columns crumbled, participants wrote messages on the nearby pavement (Courtesy Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla).

Clockwise from top left: Protesters gather outside the Peruvian Municipal Palace of Lima. Participants write messages in chalk in the Plaza de Armas in Lima. Many of the messages criticized the Peruvian government, and were later washed away by military officers. (Courtesy Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla)

LARA ALMARCEGUI AND BEGOÑA MOVELLÁN HOTEL FUENTES DE EBRO

1997

A national highway runs through Fuentes de Ebro, yet the small, Spanish village rarely receives visitors. In order to draw attention to the area, Lara Almarcegui and Begoña Movellán converted the local train station, which had been abandoned for 20 years, into a free hotel for one week. "The town is not beautiful, and not the kind of village people would likely visit," Almarcegui says. "So, I thought it would be a kind of extreme gesture to propose that people spend a week there."

She used \$400 from a small grant to renovate the concrete, two-story building, which—with high

ceilings and tiled flooring—was an apt candidate for use as a hotel. Almarcegui and Movellán painted the interior walls, brought in furniture donated by the town's residents, installed electricity and plumbing, and advertised the repurposed station in the neighboring city of Zaragoza. Though the hotel was completely booked during the project's run, the effort remained somewhat clandestine, since Almarcegui originally received permission from railway officials to use the station as an exhibition venue, not a residential facility. "They never would have let me create a free hotel, especially since there was no museum" backing the project, she says. "So the event was a secret among the guests. I even asked them to hide their luggage—I was so afraid." Fuentes de Ebro residents continue to use the building as a meeting and event space.

Almarcegui lives in Rotterdam. In preparation for *Hotel Fuentes de Ebro*, she spent one month in Spain researching unused architectural spaces that offer potential solutions to housing and urban dilemmas. Her work often explores different methods for forming relationships to communities, usually through long-term research, interviewing residents, investigating new possibilities for aging infrastructure.



Above: Guests enjoy drinks at the hotel (Courtesy Lara Almarcegui).

Opposite, top to bottom: Maids clean the hotel interior. Almarcegui and Movellán converted the abandoned Fuentes de Ebro train station into a temporary hotel (Courtesy Lara Almarcegui).





Above, top to bottom: Twelve Gulf Coast artists and Alternate ROOTS members affected by Hurricane Katrina participate in The Katrina Project. The performance consisted of a variety of artistic forms, including music, performance, and dance. (Photographs by Carlton Turner)

ALTERNATE ROOTS UPROOTED: THE KATRINA PROJECT

2006–2008

In 2006, Atlanta, Georgia-based nonprofit Alternate ROOTS presented *Uprooted: The Katrina Project*, an experimental theater production, written and performed by twelve artists from Gulf Coast communities, that offered responses to the damages they suffered and witnessed, inflicted by the 2005 hurricane. Using different artistic forms (including dance, hip-hop, and storytelling), the piece reflected the experiences of different populations in the region, based on extensive conversations the artists conducted with current and former residents of New Orleans. The performance and its related community outreach conveyed a message about the way poverty and racism can render communities vulnerable to natural disaster, the complicity of governments and citizens in enabling such destruction, and the need to reframe the tragedy as a social justice crisis.

Uprooted was produced in collaboration with actor and activist John O'Neal, an early member of Alternate ROOTS along with the organization's founder, the late Jo Carsen. Both were artists coming out of the Civil Rights and anti-war movements who wanted to affect social change in their communities through the arts. Since then, Alternate ROOTS has provided artists—particularly those who work with underserved populations in the South—with funding, support, and other forms of assistance. The organization serves communities by bringing the arts to the region, as a way to generate dialogue about the conditions in the region. "A festival can actually begin and create a conversation about the calamity that has happened in a community," says executive director Carlton Turner, "and begin the process of emotional reparation and physical reclamation of the space."

FRANCIS ALÿS WHEN FAITH MOVES MOUNTAINS

2002

Artist Francis Alÿs provided shovels to 500 volunteers standing at the base of a 1,600-foot sand dune located near an impoverished shantytown outside of Lima. For the next several hours, the volunteers, all dressed in white, climbed the mound in a single, horizontal line, digging in unison until they reach the other side, and had displaced the sand by nearly four inches. Alÿs, who lives and works in Mexico City, often makes work based in single actions, such as pushing a block of ice down a street, or walking home with a punctured paint can, trailing splattered paint behind him. For *Barrenderos*—another group action project—he followed twenty streets sweepers as they pushed garbage through the streets of Mexico City. The sweepers began in the gutters and sidewalks, collecting the debris into the center of the road until the growing heap was too heavy to move—a sculptural form that reflected the environmental costs of urban life as well as the labor of the workers. Alÿs often says that he's less interested in making objects than in making myths or designing collective experiences.

To execute *When Faith Moves Mountains*, Alÿs spent several days enlisting locals to shovel sand under the hot April sun on a cloudless day. "At first I thought it was just silly to move a rock, a stone," one participant noted in Alÿs' video documentation of the project. But interest in the project spread virally, if for no other reason than out of curiosity for how the event might constitute art. Another participant explained that he "got involved because it was about doing something with other people." *When Faith Moves Mountains* was created for the third Bienal Iberoamericana de Lima.



Above, top to bottom: Aliys' volunteers break ground at the foot of a massive sand dune just outside of Lima, Peru. By the conclusion of the epic project, participants had succeeded in moving the dune four inches from its original location. (Courtesy Francis Aliys and David Zwrner, New York)



Above, top to bottom: More than 500 volunteer workers lined the base of the 1,600-foot dune. Equipped with shovels, the local volunteers each were asked to push a small quantity of sand (Courtesy Francis Alys and David Zwirner, New York)

APPALSHOP THOUSAND KITES

1998–

When former DJ Nick Szuberla launched the only hip-hop radio program in the Appalachian region, inmates from the two neighboring SuperMax prisons began writing him letters. Some were very personal, recounting the racism and human rights violations they suffered while incarcerated. He responded by initiating an on-air chess game with the prisoners, a simple gesture that acknowledged, and provided brief respite from, their hardships. Szuberla soon began broadcasting the voices of prisoners themselves via a variety of artistic projects, including poetry segments, rap sessions, and collaborations between hip-hop artists and local mountain musicians. In one episode of the show, an imprisoned man expresses, in verse, a long overdue phone call to his brother, shortly after his mother's passing. In another, titled *Calls from Home*, a mother updates her incarcerated son on family events and describes daily activities like her morning routine.

The radio show has since expanded into *Thousand Kites*, a "national dialogue project" and nonprofit organization based in Whitesburg, Kentucky, that advocates nationally for prison reform, primarily by creating transparency around injustices that occur within the system. Szuberla sits at the helm of the organization, whose name



Above: Thousand Kites and the Community Restoration Tour trained over one hundred activists to use flip video cameras (Courtesy Appalshop).

is derived from the phrase "to shoot a kite," which in prison slang means to send a message. At the heart of the *Thousand Kites* project is a comprehensive website that features the stories of prisoners, their families, activists, and artists in the form of video and radio programs, blogs, and letter-writing campaigns. The site also includes news clips, press releases about legislative changes, and accessible educational activities such as "We Can't Pay the Bill," which outlines the rising costs of maintaining prisons.

Thousand Kites operates under the 40-year-old umbrella nonprofit Appalshop, which supports regional arts in the Appalachian region, documents local traditions, and works to abolish stereotypes of the area's residents.

JULIETA ARANDA AND ANTON VIDOKLE TIME/BANK

2010–

Imagine that you could cook someone dinner in exchange for getting your bike tire replaced, or could teach someone Chinese to have your website redesigned. *Time/Bank* is an alternative economic model that allows a group of people to exchange skills through the use of a time-based currency. Time banking arose in utopian communities during the mid-19th century and has been adapted for contemporary use by projects like Paul Glover's *Ithaca Hours*.

Started by artists Julieta Aranda and Anton Vidokle in September 2010, *Time/Bank* is an international community of more than 1,500 artists, curators, writers, and others in the field of art, who are interested in developing a parallel economy based on time and skills. Using a free website created by the artists, participants request, offer, and

Opposite: The Portikus exhibition hall currently hosts the Frankfurt branch of *Time/Bank* (Photograph by Helena Schlichtung, Courtesy of Portikus).



Zürich/Basel <-> Frankfurt am Main

Transportation
Zurich, 4h

—sara

Because I often make the trip on weekends, I am offering transport between Zürich/Basel, Switzerland and Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

POSTED: 30. OCT. 2010

Hand-writing

Communication
Brooklyn NY, 2h

—Regine Basha

If for whatever reason you need something to write (because we are all losing this skill) I can do a prettily handwritten note for you. Especially handwriting in small upper-case letters is more authoritative.

Regine

Choose your own Audio book

Communication
Email, 10h

POSTED: 27 SEPT. 2010

—Details

I will make an audio book recording of your favorite novel or something you've been trying to read but couldn't get away from the computer.

Any kind of books are preferable and something of a reasonable length (or 100 - 300 pages).

PT. 2010

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3 h

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ood, bookstores, and a spaces, with a
te hiking trails and other

POSTED: 15. SEPT. 2010

Anything

General Assistance
Anywhere, 2h

POSTED: 15. SEPT. 2010



pay for services in "Hour Notes." Earned Hours may be saved and used at a later date, given to another individual, or pooled with other Hours for larger group projects.

While much of the activity for *Time/Bank* happens online, the artists are consistently working to develop an international network of local branches. These branches can be temporary or long term, and are arranged by the founders and members of the bank. During Creative Time's 2011 exhibition *Living as Form*, *Time/Bank* opened *Time/Food*, a commissioned project and temporary restaurant located inside the by Abrons Art Center, which offered daily lunch in exchange for time credits and time currency that visitors earned by helping

others in the *Time/Bank* community. Each day, the restaurant offered a different menu of meals prepared with recipes provided by artists who like to cook, including Martha Rosler, Liam Gillick, Mariana Silva, Judi Werthein, Rirkrit Tiravanija, K8 Hardy, Carlos Motta, and many others.



Opposite: The Frankfurt *Time/Bank* houses a *Time/Store*, which offers a range of commodities, groceries, and articles of daily use (Photograph by Helena Schlichting, Courtesy of Portikus).

Above: Aranda and Vidolke presented *Time/Food*, a temporary restaurant that operated on the *Time/Bank* currency system, as part of Creative Time's *Living as Form* exhibition (Photograph by Sam Horine, Courtesy Creative Time).

CLAIRE BARCLAY THE MILLENNIUM HUT

1999

Located in the Govanhill district of Glasgow, Scotland, The Millennium Hut is a community facility designed by artist Claire Barclay in collaboration with the firm Studio KAP Architects. In 1999, five public areas of Glasgow, including Govanhill, were picked for renewal by the Millennium Space Project. With a footprint of just two meters by two meters, the three-story wooden structure enclosed a community garden store, workshop, library, shelves for growing plants, and a "viewing platform." The building was produced from recycled materials and utilized solar panels, reflecting an effort to harness natural resources, and promote sustainable living practices.

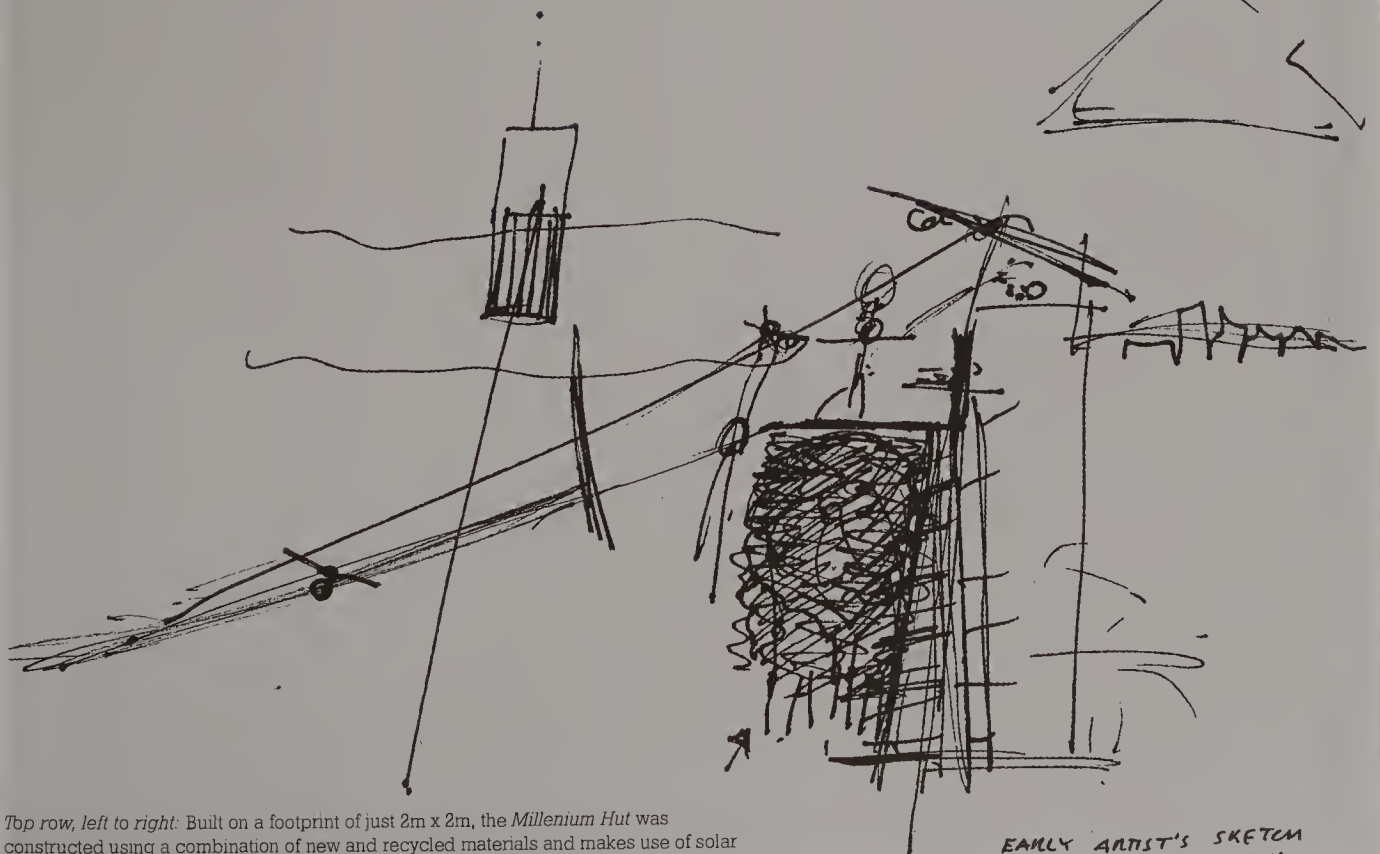
Commissioned by the Govanhill Housing Association, The Millenium Hut acted as an entry point to the Govanhill neighborhood, and served as a means of creating community in an ethnically diverse district. The Millenium Space Project, part of Glasgow's Year of Architecture and Design, is a year long program of exhibitions, events, and new commissions to celebrate the city's designation as the "UK City of Architecture 1999." Ultimately, the program and projects like the Millennium Hut generated an economic benefit of 34 million pounds and served as a catalyst for further urban regeneration.

Claire Barclay is a Glasgow-based artist known for her large-scale sculptural installations that combine formal elements with a scattered aesthetic, using platforms, screens, and other



structures around which crafted objects lie in carefully gathered constellations. She draws from both craft and industrial processes, ranging from ceramics to straw weaving, often combining metal forms with intricately woven corn dollies or delicately printed fabric. By mixing the familiar with the strange, a sense of precariousness pervades Barclay's architectural installations.

Above: Barclay's *Millennium Hut* was built to provide a much-needed community facility in the Govanhill district of Glasgow (Courtesy Claire Barclay and Chris Platt).



Top row, left to right: Built on a footprint of just 2m x 2m, the *Millennium Hut* was constructed using a combination of new and recycled materials and makes use of solar panels. The three-story structure includes a garden store, workshop, library, growing shelves, and a viewing platform. Bottom: Barclay worked with architects at Studio KAP to design the *Millennium Hut*. (Courtesy Claire Barclay and Chris Platt)

EARLY ARTIST'S SKETCH
(IN CONVERSATION WITH
ARCHITECT)

BAREFOOT ARTISTS RWANDA HEALING PROJECT

2004—

In 1994, in one of the most brutal moments in the history of genocide, two extremist Hutu militia groups killed over one million people in Rwanda in just 100 days. When Barefoot Artists founder Lily Yeh visited the region of Gisenyi ten years later, she found that mass gravesites were still completely dilapidated and survivors' camps lacked the resources to help families grieve, cope, and ultimately, recover from their losses. With the help of the Red Cross, the Rwandan government, and private foundations, Yeh launched the *Rwanda Healing Project*, a multifaceted program of cultural activities, as well as economic and environmental development efforts, operated by and for village residents.

Barefoot Artists establishes parks, murals, sculptural installations, and other community-based projects in underserved areas by involving residents in the entire process, from making aesthetic decisions to navigating public policy. The Philadelphia-based organization's first project in Rwanda was the realization of the Genocide Memorial Park in Rugerero. As part of the construction of the memorial, village residents worked with a master mason to design and build the central monument's mosaic façade. Since then, the *Rwanda Healing Project* has come to include Saturday morning storytelling sessions, English classes, football games, and visual and performing art instruction. The Rugerero Survivors' Village, where the Genocide Memorial is located, also includes a rain harvest storage system, a campaign to turn corncoobs into cooking charcoal, and a women's sewing cooperative, among other initiatives.

More recently, Barefoot Artists has collaborated with residents in the area to build the Pottery Arts Center—by first purchasing property,



then building the architecture. Finally, with the help of faculty and students from the University of Florida's Center for the Arts in Healthcare, and volunteers from the U.S. Society for the Arts in Healthcare, the community transformed the structure into a public art project by installing mosaic work and painting a mural of Twa dancers on the façade.

Above: The bone chamber, housed behind the green doors, is one element of the memorial (Photograph by Chris Landy).



Top to bottom: Barefoot Artists erected the Genocide Memorial Park in Rugerero, Rwanda, in 2007. Flowers lie at the memorial, which was designed by Barefoot Artists founder Lily Yeh (Photographs by Lily Yeh).



BASURAMA RESIDUOS URBANOS SÓLIDOS (URBAN SOLID WASTE)

2008

Basurama is a laboratory for considering waste and its reuse launched in 2001 by a group of students at the Madrid School of Architecture. Since then, the group—who now work as professional architects, designers, and other urban planners—has collaborated with communities to explore what trash, and how we treat it, can reveal about the way we consider the world. The group's work often exists in the form of workshops,

talks, and other discussion forums. But central to Basurama's practice is the actual collection of detritus, and rebuilding of public spaces, using the leftover material. For example, in Lima, Basurama rehabilitated an abandoned railway by inviting local artists and other community members to create an amusement park along the tracks. They also enlisted school children in Miami to create musical instruments out of old car parts.

Such activities began in 2008, with the series *Residuos Urbanos Sólidos* (Urban Solid Waste), projects Basurama has initiated in numerous cities globally. In the Suf refugee camp in Jerash, Jordan, the group worked with Palestinian refugees to build a children's playground and a shaded area for recreation. And in Buenos Aires, discarded cardboard was used to fashion a makeshift skate park. "We find gaps in these processes of production," Basurama says, "that not only raise questions about the way we manage our resources but also about the way we think, we work, we perceive reality."



Opposite: Recycled car tires were used to construct a climbing wall along an abandoned railway in Lima, Peru (Courtesy Basurama, RUS Lima, 2010).

Above: Community members enjoy the once-derelict public space around the railway (Courtesy Basurama, RUS Lima, 2010).



Top to bottom: Custom carts were built in Mexico City as a way of reclaiming the streets for community and play (Courtesy Basurama, RUS México, 2008). The Basurama crew work on a project in Córdoba, Argentina (Courtesy Basurama, RUS Córdoba, 2009).

BIJARI

TRANSVERSE REALITY (CHICKEN PROJECTS 1,2)

2001, 2003

Have you ever wondered what happens when the chicken actually does cross the road? According to the Brazilian collective BijaRi, people react in vastly different ways depending on their relative economic and cultural positions. In 2001, BijaRi let a chicken run loose in two São Paulo shopping districts—first near the luxury Iguatemi shopping mall and then in the adjacent Largo da Batata, a bus stop and market generally frequented by lower income residents—and filmed the public's reaction. In the Iguatemi mall, security guards immediately treated the chicken as a

criminal suspect (actually referring to it as a “suspicious entity”), carefully scrutinized its behavior, and quickly removed the animal from the property. Meanwhile, patrons of Largo da Batata, likewise suspicious, reacted to the chicken in a much less orderly fashion. They spoke to the chicken reproachfully as if it were a person, followed it *en masse*, and ultimately allowed the bird to remain on the premises. The project was presented in the form of video documentation at the Havana Biennial in 2003.

BijaRi, who work as architects, artists, and activists, explore whether “so-called public spaces are truly accessible to all,” says member Mauricio Brandão. “We are interested in the way some of these spaces become almost privatized due to aesthetic, economic, social, and behavioral patterns.” They stage confrontational actions and public performances that foster dissent, and present provocative images in urban spaces, including street signs, poster campaigns, and large-scale video projections. Projects such as Transverse Reality aim to disturb the regular flow of life by eliciting unexpected reactions from the public.



Above: A live chicken wanders around Largo da Batata, a bus stop and market generally frequented by low-income Brazilians (Courtesy BijaRi).

BREAD AND PUPPET THEATER

THE INSURRECTION MASS WITH FUNERAL MARCH FOR A ROTTEN IDEA

1962–

"Art should be as basic to life as bread." This is the motto of Bread and Puppet Theater, a 40-year-old nonprofit theater company with roots in the 1960s anti-Vietnam War and Civil Rights movements. Started by German dancer and actor Peter Schumann, Bread and Puppet performed in the streets of Manhattan's Lower East Side before relocating to a farm in Glover, Vermont. The self-financed group still uses its signature giant cardboard and paper mâché puppets—with heads so large and exaggerated that they conjure references to abstract sculpture—to take on a myriad of contemporary issues, including extremist right-wing politics and the Iraq wars. Performances have often been staged outdoors, on grassy fields, while costumed actors bring the gigantic puppets to life by hoisting them into the air, in the fashion of a barn-raising. The puppets, along with the myriad masks, paintings, and other props the company has produced over the years are housed in a one hundred-year-old barn that now serves a museum for the organization.

The Insurrection Mass with Funeral March for a Rotten Idea is a recurring show, part pageantry and part faux-religious ritual, that exorcises "rotten ideas"—political and economic events, policies, and ideologies—after offering a playful critique of them. Modeled after a traditional Catholic mass and historical witch hunts, the performances end with readings, the playing of a fiddle, and hymns; audience members are invited to participate. Bread, a symbol of compassionate, communal living, has been served at every performance since 1962.



TANIA BRUGUERA

IMMIGRANT MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL

2011–



Since April 2011, Cuban artist Tania Bruguera has been operating a flexible community space, housed in a storefront on Roosevelt Avenue in Corona, Queens, which serves as the headquarters for *Immigrant Movement International*. Engaging both local and international communities, as well as social service organizations, elected officials, and artists focused on immigration reform, Bruguera has been examining growing concerns about the political representation and conditions facing immigrants. "As migration becomes a more central element of contemporary existence, the status and identity of those who live outside their place of origin starts to become defined not by sharing a common language, class, culture, or race, but instead by their condition as immigrants," Bruguera has said. "This project seeks to embrace this common identity and shared human experience to create new ways for immigrants to achieve social recognition."

IM International, co-presented by Creative Time and the Queens Museum of Art, launched with a "Conversation on Useful Art," an event that featured moderated conversations with artists, representatives from local immigrant community organizations, and local government officials. Since then, *IM International* has opened its offices for use by local community organizations as an essential part of its mission. The Corona Youth Music Project holds weekly lessons at *IM International*, which provide young children with the opportunity learn the basic social and motor skills necessary for playing a stringed instrument. *IM International* has also teamed up with Centro Comunitario y Asesoría Legal to provide weekly intakes and workshops on immigrant rights. In addition to these regular events at the *IM International* offices, *IM International* organizes

Clockwise from top left: The office of Bruguera's *Immigrant Movement International* is located in the diverse neighborhood of Corona in Queens, New York. Immigrant Movement International provides a space for outreach activities for the local immigrant community. (Courtesy Tania Bruguera and Creative Time)

group outings and programs, which aim to bring to light the immigrant condition. Most recently, as part of "Make a Movement Sundays," a group participated in the visitor program at the Elizabeth Detention Center in Elizabeth, NJ. Participants met with immigrant detainees to learn about their experiences in order to combat the increased privatization of the detention center system since September 11th.

CAMP
PAD.MA

2008–

In the age of YouTube, online video archives aren't a novel concept. But *Pad.ma*, short for Public Access Digital Media Archive, offers culturally and politically relevant footage that users can edit, annotate, and distribute for free—transforming notions of authorship, discourse, and digital activism in the process. Co-initiated by the Mumbai-based art space CAMP and other advocacy groups who work in the disciplines of law, information technology, and human rights, *Pad.ma* contains several hundred hours of densely annotated, transcribed, and open-access material, primarily culled from users in Bangalore, Mumbai, and Berlin. Users can view the videos, which include interviews with artists, media criticism, and global healthcare polemic, via an interface that looks similar to video-editing software.

Since the 1990s, changes in video technology, and imaging practices in general, have actually served to limit public access to large archives, particularly historically valuable images. *Pad.ma* offers an experimental approach for creating and sharing video, as well as knowledge, that moves beyond the finite limitations of documentary films and the ubiquitous online video clip.

CEMETI ART HOUSE
TRADITIONAL ART AND
CULTURE PROGRAM

2007–2008

Cemeti Art House is the oldest art space in Yogyakarta, a city with no established infrastructure for the arts, but with an active, politicized contemporary art scene. In 2007 and 2008, Cemeti partnered with ten Yogyakarta-based NGOs to build a relief program for five villages in the aftermath of the massive earthquake that destroyed regions in South Asia. Called the *Traditional Art and Cultural Program*, this series of carnivals, workshops, and performances mobilized area residents to organize themselves in choreographed parades and lavishly costumed dances in an effort to revitalize traumatized communities. The program resulted in collaborations between local contemporary and traditional artists.

Cemeti was founded in 1988 by artists Mella Jaarsma and Ninditiyo Adipurnomo, who were looking to fill the lack of viable venues for alternative art practices. Since then, the organization has hosted residencies that allow artists to promote their work nationally, and on the international art circuit. In 2010, Cemeti launched "Art and Society," a series with focus on alternate, process-oriented practice, rather than the production of objects intended for gallery exhibition. The organization has also privileged the voices of artists in political discourse. "The days of a common enemy have passed and commenting on the social and political circumstances through revolt or provocation is no longer the only way," says Jaarsma. "Recent art discourse shows us the need to comment sensibly taking into account the perspective of the global market and neo-liberal developments. Artists are taking an active part in the current changes. The motto is: 'If you want change, start with yourself; you can no longer blame the government for everything.'"



Above: The post-earthquake revitalization program spanned five villages in the Bantul area near Yogyakarta. The yearlong Traditional Art and Culture Program included workshops, carnivals, and performances. (Photographs by Dwi 'Oblo' Prasetyo, Courtesy Cemeti Art House, Yogyakarta, Indonesia)



PAUL CHAN
WAITING FOR GODOT
IN NEW ORLEANS

2007



When artist Paul Chan visited New Orleans for the first time in November 2006—a little more than a year after Hurricane Katrina—he was struck by the disquieting stillness: no construction crews yelling over clanging drills, no cranes visible on the skyline, no birds singing in the distance. In the ravaged, bleak landscape of the Lower Ninth Ward, Chan recognized the solemn scenery of Samuel Beckett's iconic stage play *Waiting for Godot*. The artist perceived "a terrible symmetry between the reality of New Orleans post-Katrina and the essence of this play, which expresses in stark eloquence the cruel and funny things people do while they wait for help, for food, for tomorrow."

In the artist's words, "seeing gave way to scheming," and Chan began to collect feedback from New Orleanians on the idea of staging a free, outdoor production of the play in the Lower Ninth Ward. One piece of advice that had been given to Chan came to define the artist's approach to the project: "If you want to do this, you gotta spend the dime, and you gotta spend the time." Working closely with director Christopher McElroen of the Classical Theater of Harlem, a cast that included Wendell Pierce and J. Kyle Manzay, and New York-based public art presenter Creative Time, Chan spent the nine months leading up to the production engaging New Orleans artists, activists, and

Opposite: Artists from all over Indonesia took part in Traditional Art and Culture. The program's aim was to revitalize performing and visual arts in the traumatized areas. (Photographs by Dwi 'Oblo' Prasetyo, Courtesy Cemeti Art House, Yogyakarta, Indonesia)

Above: J. Kyle Manzay (Estragon) and Wendell Pierce (Vladimir) perform *Waiting for Godot* in New Orleans in 2007 (Photograph by Donn Young, Courtesy Creative Time).



organizers to help shape the play and broaden the social scope of the project.

The production was ultimately comprised of four outdoor performances in two New Orleans neighborhoods—one in the middle of an intersection in the Lower Ninth Ward and the other in the front yard of an abandoned house in Gentilly. However, with sustainability and accountability in mind, the project evolved into a larger series of events including free art seminars, educational

programs, theater workshops, and conversations with the community. A “shadow” fund was set up to match the production budget and was later distributed to organizations located in the Lower Ninth Ward and Gentilly.

Above: Mark McLaughlin (Lucky) and T. Ryder Smith (Pozzo) perform *Waiting for Godot* in New Orleans. (Photograph by Paul Chan, Courtesy Creative Time).

MEL CHIN ET AL. OPERATION PAYDIRT/ FUNDRED DOLLAR BILL PROJECT

2006–

When artist Mel Chin traveled to a post-Katrina New Orleans in 2006, he learned that the city's soil contained more than four times the amount of lead deemed safe by the Environmental Protection Agency—a condition that existed long before the hurricane damaged the land. He also learned that they city had no plans to repair it. Chin found that treating lead-contaminated soil, a major contributor in a lead-poisoning epidemic that affected over 30 percent of New Orleans' inner city youth, could cost \$300 million. *Operation Paydirt/Fundred Dollar Bill Project* was conceived in New Orleans as a two-fold initiative: to find a solution to the environmental threat through *Operation Paydirt*

and to create a national lead-awareness campaign through the *Fundred Dollar Bill Project*.

The *Project* is a national campaign to raise awareness and support by primarily recruiting schoolchildren (though anyone interested in participating is welcome) to draw "Fundred" dollar bills, artistic interpretations of hundred dollar bills on a pre-designed template. The drawings will be delivered, via an armored truck—which has been retrofitted to run on waste vegetable oil—to Congress to garner support of the proposed solution. In 2010, *Fundred's* armored truck set out on an 18,000-mile tour across the country, collecting nearly 400,000 "Fundred" dollar bills from thousands of schools.

The solution has also gone national—*Operation Paydirt* is now in collaboration with the EPA in Oakland, California, on the first urban implementation of *Paydirt's* protocol of lead neutralization. *Operation Paydirt* continues HUD-sponsored urban field trials in New Orleans. Chin says, "Awareness is not enough. We are aware that there is lead in the blood and brains of children who can't learn and in the bones of young men in prison. We must move into action with resolve to deliver the voices of the people in opposition to these realities, along with a solution to effectively end this threat to children across America."



Above: The interior walls of the New Orleans Safehouse, which is pictured above, are lined with thousands of hand-drawn Fundred Dollar Bills (Courtesy Endotherm Labs).



Clockwise from top: University of Arizona students, faculty, and visitors hand over bags full of Fundred Dollar Bills to the armored truck in Tempe, AZ. Schoolchildren from all over the country were asked to draw Fundred Dollar Bills, artistic interpretations of hundred dollar bills on a pre-designed template (Courtesy Fundred Dollar Bill Project).

**CHTO DELAT?
(WHAT IS TO BE DONE?)**
ANGRY SANDWICH
PEOPLE OR IN PRAISE
OF DIALECTICS

2006



On the hundredth anniversary of the first Russian Revolution, collective *Chto Delat?* (What is to Be Done?) organized activists in protest of contemporary labor inequities on the square at Narva Gate in St. Petersburg, the site of the original uprising in 1905. In this contemporary staging, *Chto Delat?* invited low-income workers who normally wear sandwich boards advertising local businesses to participate by wearing new boards bearing language from Bertolt Brecht's poem, "In Praise of Dialectics", as well as a series of questions: "Are you being exploited? Are you exploiting somebody? Is exploitation inevitable?" The first Russian Revolution was a violent and failed attempt to dislodge government; *Angry Sandwich People* aimed to reflect on the political implications of this failure.

Chto Delat?, which takes its name from Vladimir Lenin's historic political pamphlet, consists of poets, artists, philosophers, singers, set designers, critics, and writers who appropriate the iconography and terminology of Communism in their work. They work as "art soviets," inspired by the councils formed in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century. Relying heavily on political and artistic theory, *Chto Delat?* explores the idea of "participatory democracy," and the history of the word "solidarity," through exhibitions, artworks, and projects in public space.



Above, top to bottom: Low-income workers in St. Petersburg gather at the Narva Gate to commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the first Russian Revolution. Workers carry sandwich boards bearing language from Bertolt Brecht's "In Praise of Dialectics." (Courtesy Chto Delat?).

SANTIAGO CIRUGEDA **CASA ROMPECABEZAS**

2002–2004

Casa Rompecabezas, or Puzzle House, consists of glass panes, metal beams, and unpainted drywall—a plain, sturdy structure that conjures both Modernist architecture as well as industrial detritus. Designed by architect Santiago Cirugeda to be constructed, deconstructed, and transported quickly, his adaptable building slipped on and off of empty lots in Seville, Spain, for two years, and provided shelter for a range of urban needs. This included safe living space for the homeless as well as for squatters; a performance and exhibition venue for artists; and a multi-use meeting area for community activists.

Since 1996, Cirugeda has developed *Recetas Urbanas*, or “urban prescriptions,” like Puzzle House, strategies that sidestep the city’s restrictive planning and construction laws enabling anyone to solve housing issues autonomously, without the mediation of architectural specialists. Because Seville, like most cities, requires government-issued permits in order to build permanent structures on public land, Puzzle House was designed as an impermanent structure—located on privately-owned property with permission from the owner. Each installation had a specific purpose and a finite lifespan, at the end of which the inhabitants would disassemble the house in several hours and vacate the lot. The blueprint was equally simple to follow, so new users could replicate it once a new site was located and a new purpose identified. The budget for Seville’s Puzzle House included nothing beyond the cost of cheap, readily available materials since there were no permit or rental fees.

Cirugeda’s projects promote communal land-use over highly regulated and bureaucratized public ownership. Through his practice of creating

affordable solutions that empower individuals to participate in the design of their cities, Cirugeda has often asked, “How can the citizen play an important role in the development and construction of the environment?” Puzzle House proposes one possible answer by separating citizenship and property rights, and dispersing urban planning among those with the least access to the process.

CAMBALACHE COLECTIVO **(CAROLINA CAYCEDO,** **ADRIANA GARCÍA GALÁN,** **ALONSO GIL, AND** **FEDERICO GUZMÁN)** **MUSEO DE LA CALLE**

1999–

El Museo de la Calle, or “The Museum of the Street,” is a large wooden cart on wheels—a *carro esferado*—where people can exchange or donate used objects as part of an alternate economy that values recycling and a do-it-yourself ethos above profit. This mobile flea market, which originated in Bogotá, Colombia (a city with no formal recycling program), travels to other locales in order to expand its collection and increase the number of global participants.

El Museo de la Calle was first conceived of by *Colectivo Combalache*, or “Barter Collective,” a group of artists that worked in *El Cartucho*, a formerly depressed neighborhood of Bogotá located only seven blocks away from the Presidential Palace that was demolished in order to serve as

the site of The Third Millennium Park. After witnessing the bartering practices of homeless people and members of other disadvantaged groups who lived in the area, the artists began swapping goods—including clothing, books, and children's toys—as a way to participate in the community, form relationships with the people they shared the space with, and also to continue the spirit of *El Cartucho* as a site of local culture that no longer exists. Despite its name, *El Museo de la Calle* does not operate in the manner of a traditional museum. Its contents aren't preserved on pedestals or behind glass; instead, they function on the street and in the home, enabling audience interaction.



Clockwise from top right: Two women barter their goods in Plaza Che at the National University in Bogotá. Colombian schoolchildren stand next to El Vezoz ("The Swift"), the large wooden cart on wheels containing objects for barter. Onlookers view a display of objects available to barter. (Courtesy Cambalache Collective).

PHIL COLLINS THEY SHOOT HORSES

2004

In 2004, artist Phil Collins recruited teenagers in Ramallah to dance to pop music against a hot pink backdrop, without intermission for an entire day, while he filmed them in a single take. The resulting seven-hour video, *they shoot horses*, captures their sincere, marathon performance, carried out despite power outages, calls to prayer, and technical failures. In sweatbands and jerseys, the teens spun on their backs to Olivia Newton John, moved with slow, deliberate rhythm to Madonna, and scissored their arms to OutKast until finally sliding to the floor in exhaustion as Irene Cara crooned "Fame"—a song about hope, perseverance, and immortality.

Inspired by Horace McCoy's *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, a novel about dance marathons that emerged during the Great Depression, Collins' displayed his *horses* in two channels on opposing walls of darkened museum galleries, first in Britain and then internationally. Both his project and its namesake thrived by falsely glamorizing and deeply humanizing ordinary people living amid conflict.

In September 2000, riots at the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem sparked a decade of violence in Palestine, resulting in a death toll of over 6,000. Yet Collins' video, like many of his projects, avoids overtly political messages or lurid accounts of life in contested territories. Instead, he reveals personality and character that come through when people are celebrated, and by turns exploited, in front of a camera by performing uncontroversial acts. He has invited Morrissey fans in Istanbul to record Smiths covers; interviewed former talk show participants who were victimized by unethical production antics; and, on the cusp of the Iraqi war, persuaded Bagdad residents to sit for screen tests for a non-existent Hollywood movie.



Above and opposite: The teenagers danced uninterrupted for eight hours for Collins' video (Courtesy of Shady Lane Productions in Ramallah).



CÉLINE CONDORELLI AND GAVIN WADE SUPPORT STRUCTURE

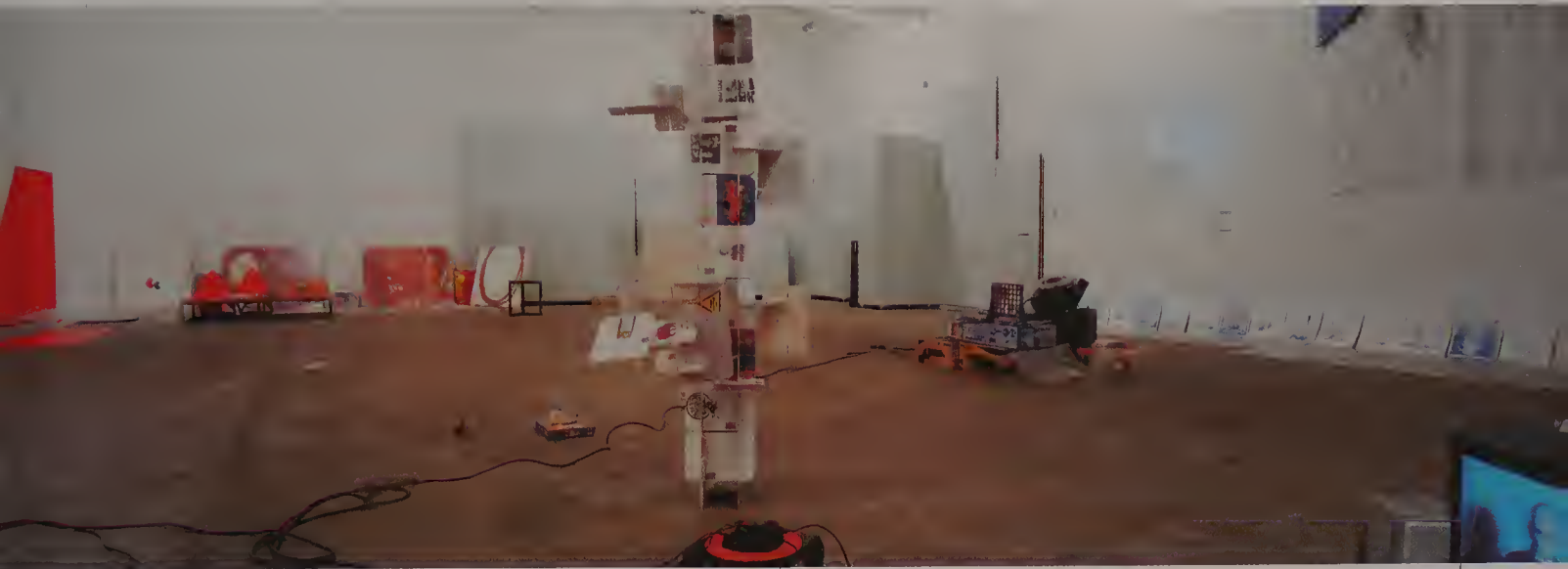
2003–2009

Support Structure was an architectural interface, created by architect Céline Condorelli and artist-curator Gavin Wade, that could be continually reinvented by its users for different purposes, such as housing objects or facilitating working environments. In each iteration of the project, the infrastructure allowed the people within it to consider the meaning of the space, as well as the meaning of “support”: “While the work of supporting might traditionally appear as subsequent, unessential, and lacking value in itself,” Condorelli writes about the project, “[it is also a] neglected, yet crucial mode through which we apprehend

and shape the world.” *Support Structure* delved into a range of arenas, such as art, politics, urban renewal, and education. Through each iteration, Condorelli and Wade aimed to build a universally adaptable structure that still privileged specific needs over generic, monolithic ones.

Support Structure launched with the project “I Am A Curator,” at the Chisenhale Gallery in London, which offered storage, archival, and organizational space for artwork, and provided an interface between the public, the work, curators, and gallery staff. “I Am A Curator” also allowed Chisenhale Gallery’s visitors to be a curator for one day, using artworks housed in an architectural environment constructed inside the gallery. Their “music for shopping malls” employed existing commercial icons of the mall—Muzak and shopping bags—to reflect on the components of the space that make this environment tick. “What type of cultural and experiential knowledge does a mall produce?” they asked. “Music for shopping malls” treats malls as both high and low culture, and as choreographed spaces, designed and organized as interior civilizations that are cut off from the outside world, yet completely mired in the global economy and its cultural infrastructure.





Opposite: Phase 9 (Public) of *Support Structure* was the development of Eastside Projects, a new artist-run space and public gallery in Birmingham (Photograph by Stuart Whipps).

Above: Phase 1 (Art) of *Support Structure* took place as part of the exhibition "I am a Curator" at London's Chisenhale Gallery (Photograph by Per Huttner).



**CORNERSTONE
THEATER COMPANY**
LOS ILLEGALS AND TEATRO
JORNALEROS SIN FRONTERAS
(DAY LABORERS THEATER
WITHOUT BORDERS)

2007

For six months, playwright Michael John Garcés spent his days in a Home Depot parking lot in Hollywood and on a street corner in Redondo Beach, two of the most prominent—and controversial—day laborer job sites in Los Angeles. He waited in line with undocumented workers seeking jobs, listened to their stories, and formed relationships with members of this historically voiceless group. Then, as part of his residency at LA's Cornerstone Theater, he wrote the play *Los Illegals*, a fictional account of day laborers caught in the criminal justice system. Since its inception, Cornerstone has embedded professional playwrights and actors in a variety of com-

munities—from small towns to groups organized around social justice issues, like reproductive rights and environmental protection—to produce theater that reflects local concerns, histories, and efforts. Community members are then cast in the production.

Los Illegals, which premiered at Cornerstone in 2007 and then traveled to other cities, evolved into *Teatro Jornaleros Sin Fronteras*, a small touring production that enlists day laborers to engage in dialogue both on and off the stage. Directed by Juan José Magandi, a day laborer who first acted in *Los Illegals*, the company produces two to three plays a year at job sites for approximately 150 audience members. Full-time ensemble members write the scripts, which often convey difficult or painful subject matter in a raucous, rallying, comedic format. For example, on-the-job accidents may be exaggerated for the sake of emphasizing the harsh realities of working without healthcare benefits. Despite the inherent dangers of visibility, few day laborers decline to participate when offered the opportunity, says Garcés, who now serves as Cornerstone's artistic director. "In the social justice movement, it's hard to pin down cause and effect. There's a big difference between being represented in the media, and standing up to represent yourself. To be able to change the meta-narrative; that's empowering."



Opposite, top to bottom: Day laborers perform in *Los Illegals*, which premiered at Cornerstone Theatre in Los Angeles in 2007 (Courtesy John Luker/Cornerstone Theater Company). Day laborers perform in a production of *Teatro Jornaleros Sin Fronteras* (Courtesy Sam Cohen/Cornerstone Theater Company).

Above: *Los Illegals* evolved into *Teatro Jornaleros Sin Fronteras*, a small touring production that enlists day laborers to engage in dialogue both on and off the stage (Courtesy Sam Cohen/Cornerstone Theater Company).

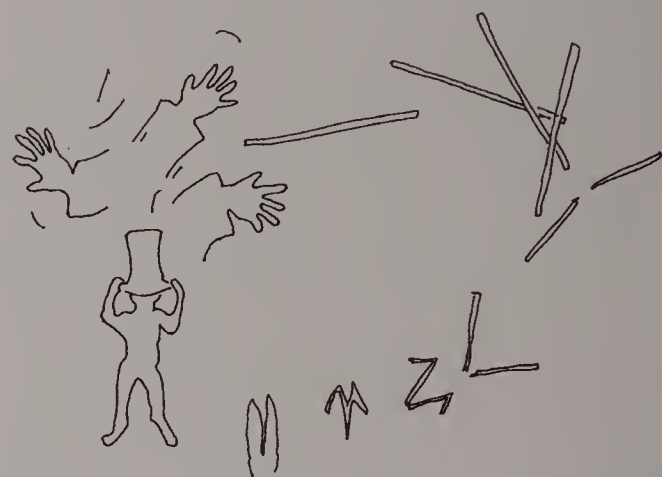
ALICE CREISCHER AND ANDREAS SIEKMANN

EXARGENTINA

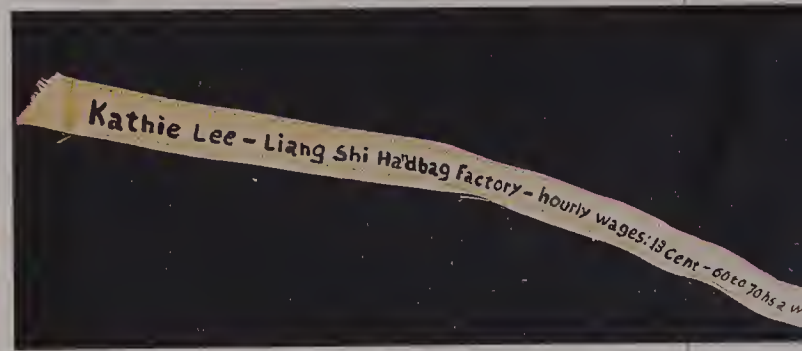
2002–2005

When Berlin-based artists Andreas Siekmann and Alice Creischer began investigating Argentina's 2001 economic collapse and the ensuing public uprisings, they wondered: Why is the crisis always depicted in the media by burning tires and street barricades, rather than corporate buildings and shopping malls? In other words, why were signs of the downfall highlighted in lieu of its causes? And can the use of such stock, iconic images be avoided? The artists moved to Buenos Aires to search for answers. Within the first few weeks of their stay, they joined citizens in street battles, the occupation of factories, and confrontations with police. Siekmann and Creischer then sought ways to accurately depict this political moment by collaborating with artists to produce *ExArgentina*, three years of immersive projects that included a conference in Berlin, an exhibition in Cologne, the publication of a book, and a second exhibition in Buenos Aires.

These events reflected various methods of coping with economic hardship and enacting resistance without relying on stereotypical or disempowering images of struggle or discord. For example, the screen-printed posters of artists/activists used during demonstrations; suits from a now-defunct clothing factory decorated with descriptions of the G8 meetings and also current working conditions in the country; and a vast map of the Argentinian crisis as it related to the global economy.



This page, right: These drawings accompanied the chapter openings of the publication Creischer and Siekmann produced; from the top, the chapter titles are Negation, Militant Investigations, Cartography, and Political Narration (Courtesy Alice Creischer and Andreas Siekmann).



Above, clockwise from top left: Suits from the defunct Brukman textile factory in Buenos Aires are adorned with ephemera depicting the economic hardship in the country. A small ribbon on one of the suits describes the current working conditions in Argentina. Ex-Argentina was exhibited at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne in 2004 and at the Palais de Glace in Buenos Aires in 2006. (Photographs by Sol Arrese)

MINERVA CUEVAS
THE MEJOR VIDA CORP.
(BETTER LIFE CORP.)

1998–

Minerva Cuevas' protests against capitalism don't take the form of riots or picket lines. "In Mexico, there are demonstrations every day, but I don't think they work anymore," Cuevas has said. "People are too used to them." Instead, the artist uses her web-based nonprofit corporation, Mejor Vida Corp. ("Better Life Corp.") to distribute products and services—including basic needs such as access to transportation and affordable food—for free. Since 1998, she has offered pre-validated subway tickets, pre-paid envelopes for domestic and international mailing, student ID cards that allow users to receive discounted rates, and barcode stickers that reduce the price of food in supermarkets. Less obviously functional items include so-called "safety pills" for late-night subway rides (so riders don't fall asleep). Participants in the project can also contribute money—not to Cuevas' project, but to others in need. Mejor Vida Corp. redistributes the donated funds to panhandlers and provides documentation of the donation to the donor. Orders for barcodes, subway tickets, and other products can be placed through Mejor Vida Corp.'s website, which is organized much like a commercial business site, except that it advertises institutional critique—"We wonder if in fact the National Lottery helps to finance public assistance...if so, where is it?"—instead of the consumption of goods.

Cuevas' works tweak existing social and economic systems to suggest possibilities for more equitable conditions, often by offering alternatives such as her MVC products, or "S.COOP," a new currency she introduced at London's Petticoat Lane Market. She uses a range of media

from photography and video to performance and public intervention, based on detailed research, to skewer corporations. For example, her *Del Monte campaign*, critiqued the privatization of natural resources in South America, and more recent work considers the environmental and historical repercussions of the oil industry in Mexico.

DECOLONIZING
ARCHITECTURE
ART RESIDENCY
OUSH GRAB
(THE CROW'S NEST)

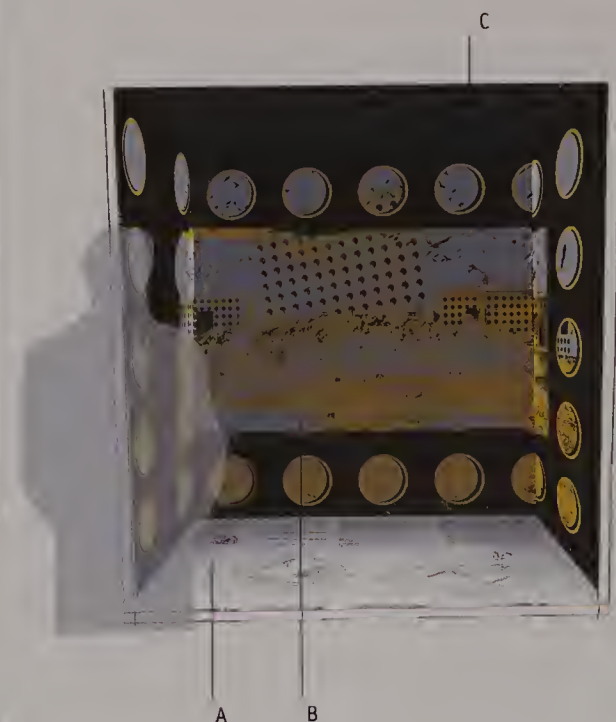
2008

Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency is a Palestinian art and architecture collective and a residency program based in Beit Sahour, Palestine. Organized by architects Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petti, and Eyal Weizman, DAAR examines the possible re-usage of existing architecture in occupied territories—a process they refer to as "Revolving Door Occupancy."

In 2006, the Israeli army evacuated Oush Grab (literally translated as "The Crow's Nest"), a hilltop military site at the edge of Beit Sahour, Bethlehem, from which colonial regimes had governed Palestine for centuries. When Israeli settlers took control of the abandoned building, Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency (DAAR), along with other Palestinian and international activists, reclaimed Oush Grab as public space and initiated plans to convert it into a multi-use park. To generate interest as well as support for the plan, DAAR hosted bingo games, film



screenings, prayer sessions, and tours of the land with the help of NGOs and the local municipality. The Israeli settlers retaliated by marking the old structure with graffiti, which DAAR responded to by organizing community cleanup measures. In addition, after discovering that same hilltop was also a roosting ground for thousands of migrating birds, DAAR punctured the structure with holes in order to transform it into both an observatory and a nesting place.



Clockwise from top: The hilltop military site Oush Grab ("The Crow's Nest") was evacuated in 2006 by the Israeli army. Decolonizing Architecture's rendering of the site illustrates plans for conversion into a multi-use park. (Courtesy Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency).

JEREMY DELLER BATTLE OF ORGREAVE

2001–



The memory of labor clashes in working-class neighborhoods often lives on in family folklore and community history. But the 1984 National Union of Mineworkers' strike in South Yorkshire's Orgreave still felt palpable and present to residents of this small village seventeen years later as they gathered for a re-enactment organized by British artist Jeremy Deller. Commissioned by the London-based arts organization Artangel and public television broadcaster Channel 4, Deller enlisted historical re-enactment expert Howard Giles to orchestrate the filmed production. One third of the more than 800 participants were former miners and police officers, many of whom had been involved in the original strike.

Once again, the miners gathered at the local coking plant, then marched to a nearby field when the police arrived. Deller and Giles took pains to match the intensity of the '84 strike, which erupt-

ed into violence, particularly on the part of law enforcement. In preparation for the re-enactment, the artist spent months researching the strike—pouring over court testimonies, oral accounts, contemporary newspaper reports and film footage—in order to reconstruct events as accurately as possible.

London-based Deller acts as curator, producer, and director in his projects, which revolve around his engagement with perceptions and memories. In 2009, he organized *It Is What It Is: Conversations About Iraq*, a collaborative commission of Creative Time, the New Museum and 3M, that culminated in a cross-country road trip and series of conversations about the Iraq War at public sites. In tow was the ultimate conversation starter: a car destroyed in a bombing on Al-Mutanabbi Street, Baghdad in March 2007.

Above: More than 800 people—many of them former miners and police—participated in Deller's re-enactment of 1984's Battle of Orgreave (Photograph by Martin Jenkinson, Courtesy Artangel).



Above: Re-enactors play the role of strikers dodging an unprovoked charge from the mounted police (Photograph by Martin Jenkinson, Courtesy Artangel).



Above: Strikers from the re-enactment sport yellow badges that identify them as members of the National Union of Mineworkers. (Photograph by Martin Jenkinson, Courtesy Artangel).



MARK DION, J. MORGAN PUETT, AND COLLABORATORS MILDRED'S LANE

1998–

In 1998, artists J. Morgan Puett and Mark Dion transformed a 92-acre Pennsylvania farm, built in the 1830s, into Mildred's Lane, a mecca for experimental living and art production. The three-building compound serves as a creative retreat at the end of a long dirt road, housing an apiary, tree

house, pavilion, and an elaborate, fruitful garden. Puett and Dion invite visitors to inhabit the land as if it were a studio, camp out, and embrace its natural resources as media. Many come to collaborate on performances, films, books, and other projects—particularly those that explore daily life practices, such as eating, shopping, and sleeping.

Each summer, Puett and Dion host themed sessions for three weeks; in 2010 the session Town & Country explored the divisions between urban and rural life through poetry readings, and workshops based on Thoreau's *Walden*. This past summer, a group of artists, engineers, and environmentalists devised a "complete aquatic environment for humans and non-humans" by studying sustainable hydrology, the history of aquariums, and architecture. The original farmhouse, now Mildred's Lane Historical Society and Museum, houses an archive of past projects.



Above: Pablo Helguera and Academia de los Nocturnos presented work while guest chefs b in June 2011 (Courtesy Mildred's Lane).



Top to bottom: Participants at Mildred's Lane enjoyed a Social Saturday dinner with artist Fritz Haeg in 2010. For a Social Saturday Supper Club in 2011, a selection of readers, including Robert Fitterman of The Word Shop, read their work. (Courtesy Mildred's Lane).

MARILYN DOUALA-BELL AND DIDIER SCHAUB DOUAL'ART

1991–

Doual'art is a nonprofit cultural organization and research center founded in 1991 in Douala, Cameroon, by husband and wife team Didier Schaub and Marilyn Douala-Bell. Created to foster new urban practices in African cities, *doual'art* invites contemporary artists to engage with the city of Douala in order to mold its identity and to bridge the gap between the community and contemporary art production. In particular, the organization offers coaching and support to artists whose research and work are centered on urban issues.

The group uses art as an instigator of economic and social change, especially as a means of fighting poverty and indigence. By producing site-specific interventions and hosting exhibitions, lectures, residencies, and workshops *doual'art* works as an intermediary between social and economic actors, local collectives, and the general population. It fosters cultural and artistic initiatives as a tool for bridging divides between different urban populations, in turn promoting social cohesion. *doual'art* implements a participatory approach to cultural practice, negotiating with local communities, NGOs and authorities their specific needs and aspirations and involving artists as facilitators of the development processes.

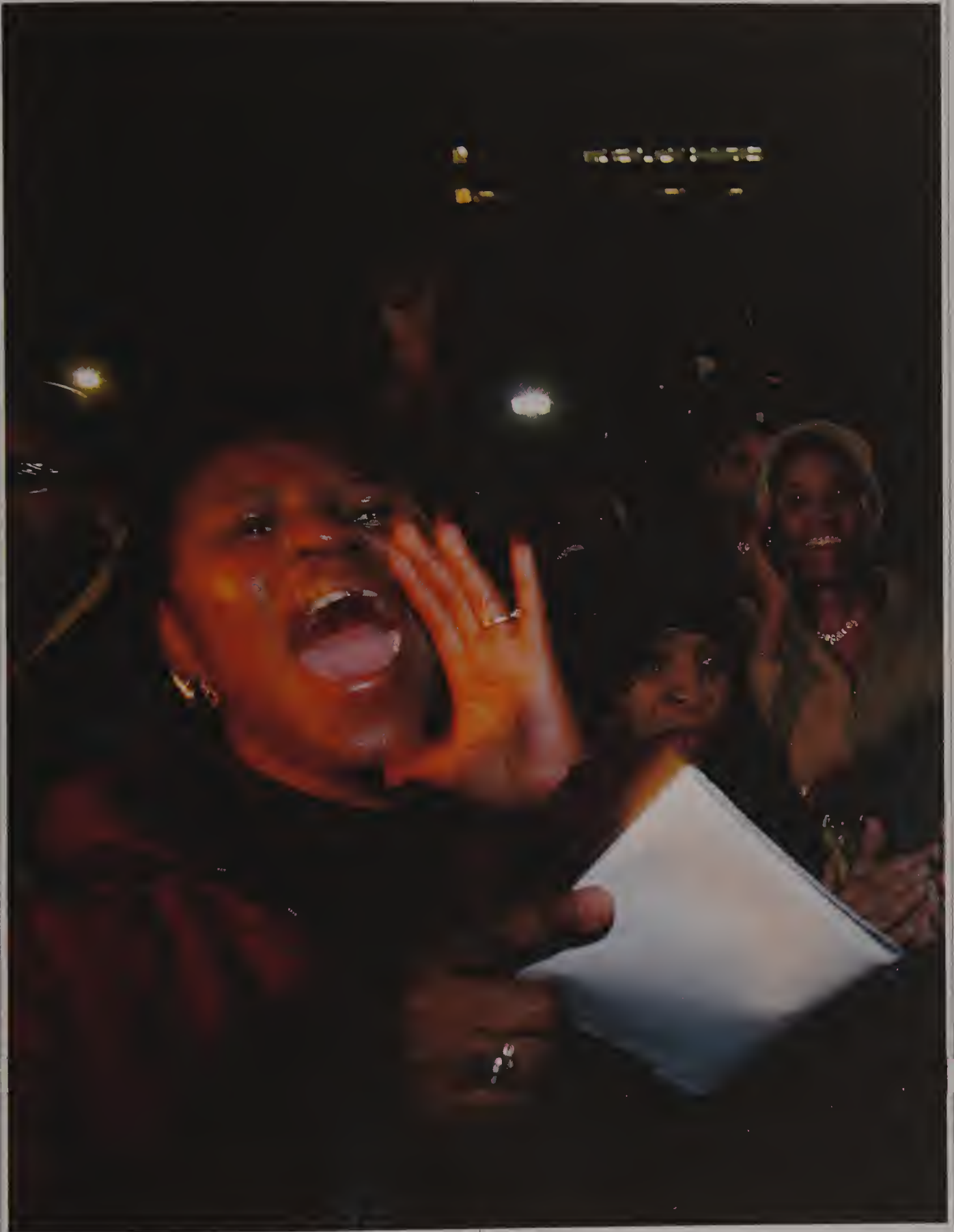
In 2007, *doual'art* hosted the first Salon Urbain de Douala (SUD 2007), a weeklong public art festival that gave artists free rein to explore urban issues specific to Douala. Proposals addressed contemporary issues like urban mobility, tradition vs. modernity, African continental integration, and the art world and cultural policy, and resulted in performances, temporary installations, happening, concerts and film screenings. Three years in the making, SUD 2010, the second

iteration of the SUD festival, addressed the theme "Water and the City." Host to thirty events including public art installations and performances, the festival also offered fourteen short-term (15 days to one month) residencies that allowed guest artists from abroad to participate.

ELECTION NIGHT HARLEM, NEW YORK

2008

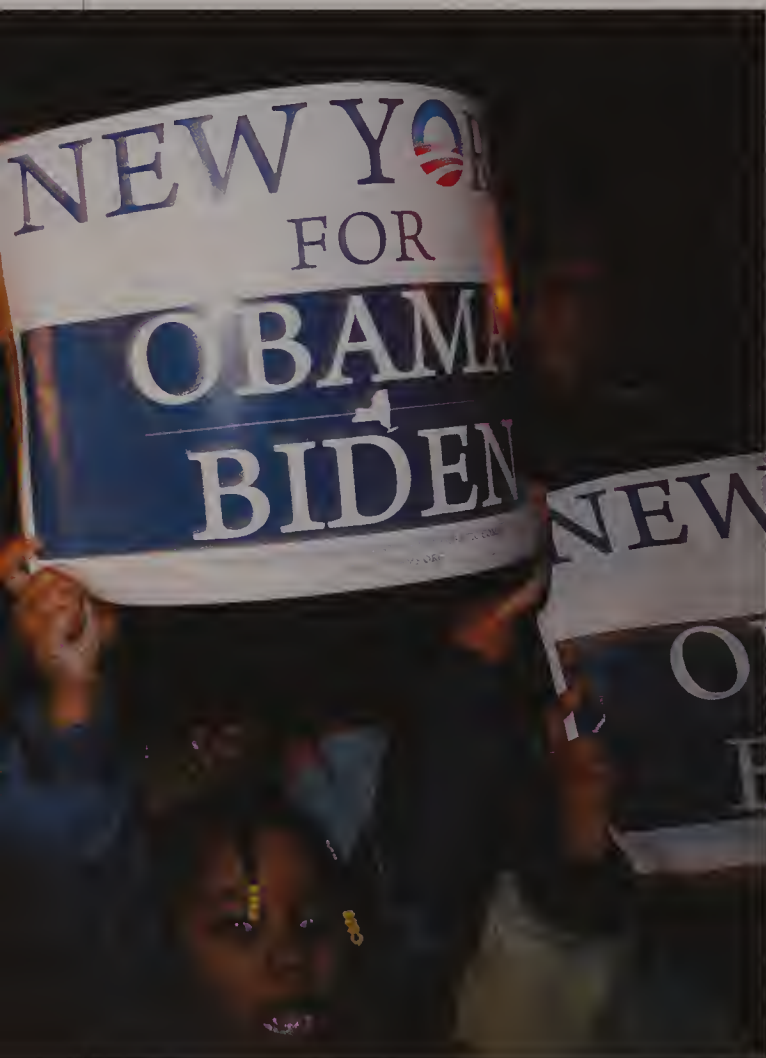
On November 4, 2008, people across the U.S. celebrated the election of Barack Obama—on streets, at polls, and in bars. Yet, in the predominantly African-American neighborhood of Harlem, New York, the mass, spontaneous eruptions of spirit seemed unified, at times even choreographed, as if residents had been waiting backstage, maybe not for the curtain to lift, but for the glass ceiling to finally shatter. Minutes after Republican nominee John McCain conceded the race to Obama, thousands of people poured out of their homes and businesses onto the intersection of 125th Street and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Boulevard waving banners, line dancing, and breaking out in song as they paraded through the neighborhood. Police officers charged with patrolling the scene clasped Obama T-shirts, while people climbed atop cars to record the festivities with their cell phones. With the camera crews' bright lights beaming on them, revelers built ice sculptures, beat drums, painted their faces, and blared music from speakers, which were eventually quieted before the broadcast of the president-



Above. On Nov. 4th, 2008, a massive celebration broke out in Harlem, New York, after the announcement that Barack Obama had won the presidential election (Photograph by Spencer Platt, Courtesy Getty Images).

elect's speech—an event that, for many, signified a power shift beyond the usual torch-passing from one political party to the next.

In the 1920s, Harlem incubated a flood of artistic production, the formation of black cultural and political organizations, and an overall collective expression within the community. The post-election demonstrations commemorated the history of the Harlem Renaissance, as well as the energy of grassroots activism that the Democratic campaign had embodied in its last few months. The night also conjured a more typical American phenomenon: the endorphin-induced euphoria of sports fans after a winning game. As one blogger wrote the day after, "Not since the Giants won the Super Bowl has New York come together like this."



FALLEN FRUIT PUBLIC FRUIT JAM

2006–

In 2004, Fallen Fruit—the artists David Burns, Matias Viegner, and Austin Young—created maps of fruit trees growing on or over properties in Los Angeles within a five-block radius of their homes, and then distributed the maps to the public for free. Property laws regarding the ownership of trees, even those on private land, are ambiguous in Los Angeles: When branches and foliage extend beyond one neighbor's yard to another, maintenance rights extend as well. And when fruit hangs over fences and sidewalks in the urban environment, passersby arguably have the right to pluck it. By making these potentially contested areas in Los Angeles visible, Fallen Fruit encouraged the city's residents to consider their implications and also to explore this car-centric region on foot, thereby socializing with new people under new conditions.

The group's *Public Fruit Jam* project takes this outreach effort one step further: Since 2006, they have invited the public to bring their own home-grown or street-picked fruit to events at museums or galleries in order to make jam. Without working from recipes, they ask people to sit at tables with strangers, negotiate ingredients, and engage in discussion. For example, "If I have lemons and you have figs, we'd make a lemon jam (with lavender)," the artists explain on their website. These "jam sessions" stem from the seeds of Fallen Fruit's practice—a reconsideration of public and private land use, as well as relations between those who have resources and those who don't. "Using fruit as our lens, [we] investigate urban space, ideas of neighborhood and new forms of located citizenship and community," says Burns.

Above: Children carry signs of support for Barack Obama in Harlem on election night, 2008 (Photograph by Spencer Platt, Courtesy Getty Images).

Opposite, clockwise from top left: Fallen Fruit post jam-making instructions for the event attendees to follow. The public brings different kinds of fruit and works without recipes, which results in unique jam flavors. Attendees participate in a Public Fruit Jam at Machine Project, Los Angeles (Courtesy Fallen Fruit).

HOW to JAM

BRING TO A BOIL:

5 cups fruit

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup⁺ pectin

ADD:

5 cups SUGAR

BRING TO A BOIL AGAIN BRIEFLY

POUR INTO JARS

LEAVE A JAR FOR FELLOW JAMMERS

SWAP A JAR WITH YOUR



PUBLIC FRUIT JAM - EAT

Only store this jam in a sealed refrigerator. Or freeze for long-term storage. Or use with public fruit and sugar with n

<http://www.fallenfruit>



**BITA FAYYAZI,
ATA HASHEMINEJAD,
KHOSROW HASSANZADEH,
FARID JAHANGIR AND
SASSAN NASSIRI**
STUDIO

1991

In 1991, five Iranian artists, Farid Jahangir and Sassan Nassiri, Bita Fayyazi, Ata Hasheminejad, and Khosrow Hassanzadeh, took over an abandoned house in Tehran, Iran, and used it as both studio space and found object—a place to collaborate, and also explore the physical and political meaning of urban architectural detritus. They spent two months creating various projects in the house, including paintings, installations, and sculptures. An installation of wallpaper peeled away from the walls in long strips, broken vases spilled over countertops and out of cabinets, and atmospheric projections of images like El Greco's *Burial of Count Orgaz* filled the relatively spare rooms of the house.

At the end of the two-month period, they opened the project to the public, as well as other



Above: In 1991, five Iranian artists took over an abandoned house in Tehran and treated it as an art piece (Photograph by Behnam Monadizadeh).



artist collaborators. During the artists stay, the house maintained its status as abandoned property—no effort to renovate it occurred—while it also evolved into an active, lived space. After the run of the show, the artists demolished the house, carrying out its original, intended fate.

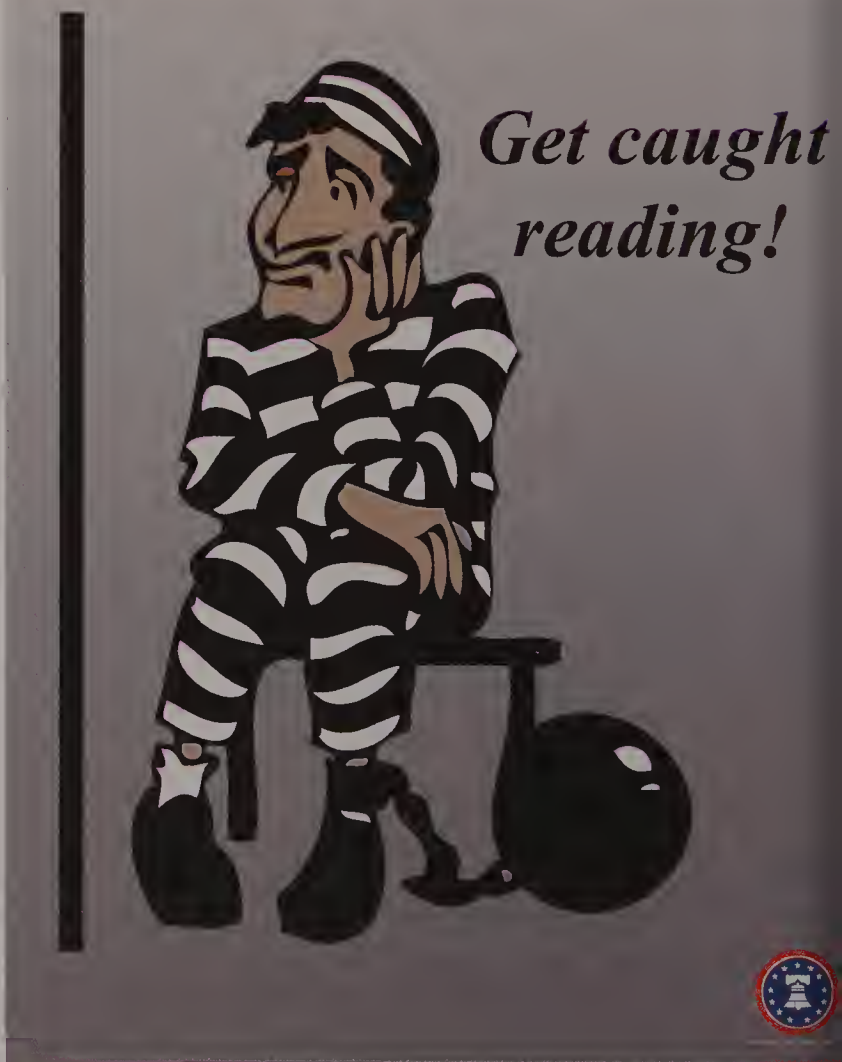
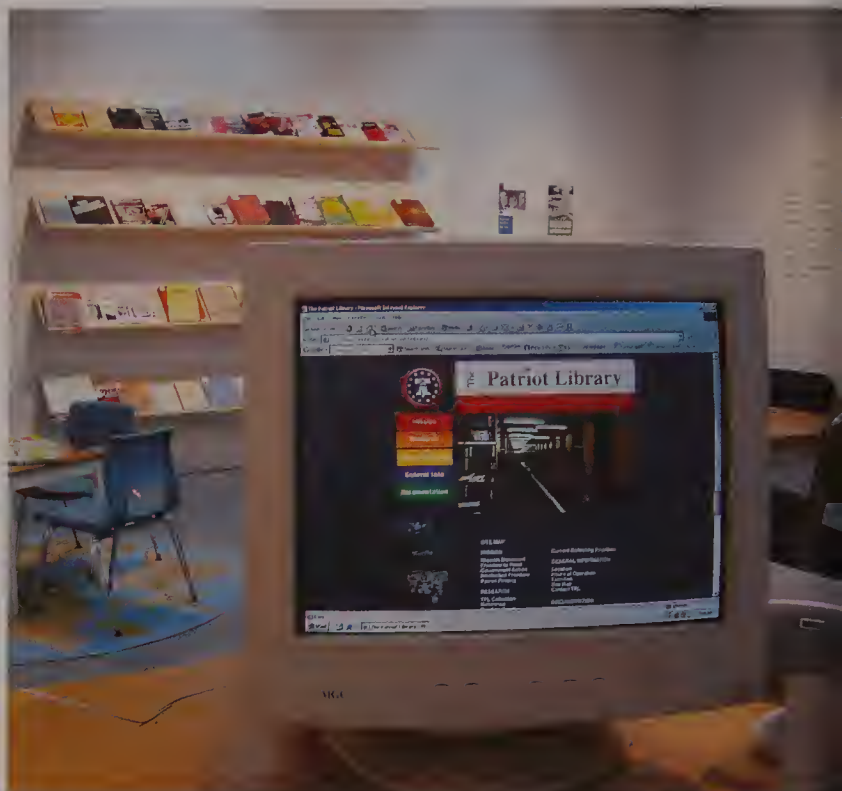
Above and right: Over the course of two months, the artists created installations using various materials in the house (Photograph by Farid Jahangir). After that time, they opened the house up to the public (Photograph by Afshin Najafzadeh). At the end of the exhibition, the house was destroyed (Photograph by Afshin Najafzadeh).

FINISHING SCHOOL THE PATRIOT LIBRARY

2001–

The Patriot Library is a nomadic collection of books, periodicals, and other media deemed potentially dangerous by the Federal government once The Patriot Act took effect after the acts of terrorism on September 11, 2001. These documents cover aviation training, chemistry, propaganda, tactical manuals, tourist information, and weaponry—general topics that were likely researched by the World Trade Center attackers. “However, we don’t believe the pursuit of knowledge is in itself dangerous,” says Finishing School’s Ed Giardina. “Individuals should be allowed access to all media free of governmental oversight and intimidation.” Finishing School conceived of the project after many conversations with librarian Christy Thomas, who witnessed the government’s violation of library patrons’ right to privacy without judicial oversight. Understanding the American Library Association’s privacy standards, *The Patriot Library* doesn’t keep records of visitor’s personal information or use of materials. The project, co-organized by Thomas and Finishing School, was first installed in Oakland’s Lucky Tackle gallery in 2003.

Los Angeles-based Finishing School works with experts from other fields to investigate and take on alternative approaches to activism, particularly environmental, social, and political issues. In 2008, the collective launched *Little Pharma*, which examines alternative medicines and lifestyles as a viable antidote to some of the drug industry’s pathologies. *Little Pharma* consists of a series of workshops, roundtable meetings, lectures, weblog, community medicinal garden, and a drug-themed bike ride.



Top: At Oakland's Lucky Tackle gallery, *The Patriot Library*'s reference website could be used to browse the book collection. Above and opposite: Posters advertising *The Patriot Library*. (Courtesy Finishing School and Adam Rompell/Lucky Tackle)



Learn to read the rainbow



The Patriot Library, 200, Lucky Bldg, Oakland, CA

FREE CLASS FRANKFURT/M ART WORKERS COUNCIL

2007–



The Art Workers Council is a forum initiated by Free Class Frankfurt, a group that began as a reading club at the art school *Staedelschule*, and expanded to include members from outside the student body. This self-organized artists' association addresses art and politics via reading groups, seminars, collaborative exhibitions, parties, and public events—all non-academic frameworks that counter economic disparities that result in limited access to the arts and arts education. In April 2010, Art Workers Council staged a demonstration against wage labor to promote “a social revolution that won’t be satisfied with formal promises of freedom, but sees communism of the 21st century as the solid self-determination of everybody,” according to their manifesto:

“Art is no wage labor. Artistic freedom promises its producers to themselves decide about the means, ways, and content of production. This formal independence from the standards of surplus value production still feeds the contradicting promise of art to allow self-determined production, despite capitalism. This assumed salvation of artistic refusal of wage labor is the humiliating competition for a place among those 5 percent, who at least temporarily can survive from their income as artists. One who is not yet part of those chosen few, is allowed to hope for the slightly better chance of getting a place in the state-funded residency carousel, traveling from one gentrification project to another. This includes free studio-usage and pocket money, but continuities of political commitment and solidarity organization can barely take place in this context.”



...mer in einem Arbeiterklub.

...erklub“, Aufführung eines Stückes von Meyerhold.¹

FRENTE 3 DE FEVEREIRO

2004—

On February 3rd, 2004, Brazilian dentist Flávio Sant'Ana was in the wrong place at the wrong time—or, so the story goes. As he made his way down a street in sprawling São Paulo, Sant'Ana—a young black man—was shot in the head and killed by the city's military police. In the aftermath of the tragedy, the police claimed that they had mistaken Sant'Ana for the perpetrator in a robbery and that his death was nothing more than an unfortunate accident. The mainstream media quickly perpetuated this narrative. However, a counter-narrative soon emerged and Sant'Ana's death became a touchstone for racial injustice in Brazil.

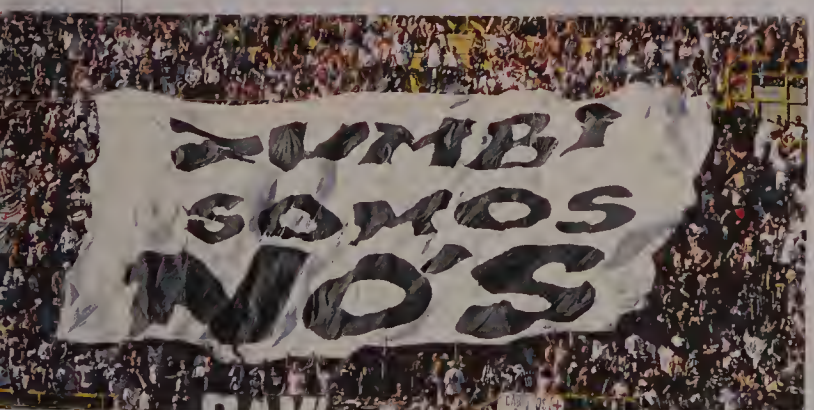
For one group, made up of artists and academics, the event revealed “racial democracy as a deliberate attempt to deny perverse social practices punctuated by the legacy of slavery.” Adopting the name *Frente 3 de Fevereiro* the self-described “research and intervention group” began creating overtly political projects to challenge the mainstream narrative and bring public awareness to the killing. First, the group fabricated a plaque that was placed at the exact spot where Sant'Ana was murdered. The text on the plaque served as a memorial for Sant'Ana but also made a clear case for what had actually transpired. Later, *Frente* pasted posters throughout the city asking the provocative question, “Who polices the police? Police racism.”

Frente 3 de Fevereiro's outreach culminated in the fifty-minute video *Zumbi Somos Nós: Cartografia do Racismo para o Jovem Urbano* (*We are Zumbi: A Cartography of Racism for Urban Youth*), a poetic manifesto on racism that has been screened internationally. The group contin-

Top to bottom: Members use a reading room in a workers' club in Germany. Free Class Frankfurt layers a contemporary image with a vintage photograph of a performance in a typical German worker's club. (Courtesy Free Class Frankfurt)



Above: Frente 3 do Fevereiro created a horizontal monument to commemorate the death of Flavio Sant'Ana, a young black dentist wrongfully murdered by São Paulo military police in 2004 (Courtesy of Frente 3 de Fevereiro).



ues to advocate for racial justice by contextualizing information the public receives through mass media and creating new forms of protest pertaining to racial issues.



Top to bottom: During Rio de Janeiro's Carnival in 2010, Frente 3 de Fevereiro's intervention *Haiti Aqui* (Haiti Here), a 3-foot inflatable ball, connected the past and present conditions in Haiti with the conditions in the slums of Rio de Janeiro (Photograph by Cris Ribas). Signs created by Frente 3 de Fevereiro reading, "Save Black Brazil" and "Where are the blacks?" (Courtesy Frente 3 de Fevereiro); "We are zombies" (Photograph by Peetssa).

Above: The "We Are Zumbi" flag hangs outside a Homeless Movement occupation in downtown São Paulo as part of the resistance to keep the building (Photograph by Julia Valiengo).

THEASTER GATES THE DORCHESTER PROJECT

2009–

Since 2009, artist and urban planner Theaster Gates has purchased three abandoned buildings on Chicago's South Side and refitted them with remnants of the city's urban landscape, including wooden floors that once lined an old bowling alley, and windows that served as doors in a museum. The renovated structures—a former candy store, a single-family home, and a duplex—also house pieces of Chicago's cultural history: In an effort to preserve the collections, Gates acquired 14,000 books from a now-defunct bookstore and 60,000 antique lanternslides from the University of Chicago's archive. Last year, he purchased 8,000 vinyl records when a Hyde Park record shop closed. *The Dorchester Project*, named after the street his buildings occupy, has become an expansive redevelopment effort, with the help of architects, students, and city officials.

What began as a mission to rescue architecture and objects has evolved into a larger mission to bring artistic and social change to the South Side, a historically underserved neighborhood. *The Dorchester Project* serves as an incubator for community artists and as an informal gathering space where the public can meet for dinner, attend performances, and engage in discussions about art, urban blight, and possibilities for renewal. While Gates' project has been largely touted as a positive development, it has also generated criticism—in the form of hate letters.



Above: Remnants from Chicago landmarks were repurposed to create the façade and decorate the interior of the *Dorchester Project* building (Courtesy of the artist and Kavi Gupta Chicago | Berlin).



Above: The building houses a collection of 60,000 antique lanternslides from the University of Chicago (top), 14,000 books Gates acquired from a now-defunct bookstore (middle), and 8,000 vinyl records from a closed Hyde Park record shop (bottom). (Courtesy of the artist and Kavi Gupta Chicago | Berlin)

ALONSO GIL AND FREDERICO GUZMÁN ARTIFARITI

2007–

For years, the Moroccan government and a local Sahrawi dissident group have been at an impasse over ownership of occupied land in the disputed territory of Western Sahara in North Africa. The conflict has resulted in a myriad of human rights violations in Sahrawi refugee camps along a 2,700-kilometer sand wall, studded with

landmines, that divides the Western Sahara territory from Morocco. ARTifariti is an international art festival that was launched in 2007 in response to the violence and repressive conditions that the militarized “Wall of Shame” engenders. This annual event, comprised of exhibitions, workshops, and symposia, takes place in the refugee camps and in the oasis town of Tifariti, part of the so-called “Liberated Territories” or “Buffer Zone” of Western Sahara.

Initiated by artists Federico Guzmán and Alonso Gil, ARTifariti accepts proposals from artists across the globe. A team of curators chooses six projects that generally involve local materials and resources and prompt permanent, structural change in Sahrawi. For example, in 2010, the festival supported a series of children’s workshops in a neighboring town. The school-aged participants painted a mural of Western Sahara that was used as a backdrop while they re-enacted bombings, bank robberies, and other events that mark the lives of their Sahrawi peers.





Opposite: Kneita Boudda prints T-shirts at Sahara Libre Wear workshop, a fashion label created by Alonso Gil in collaboration with the Sahrawi community (Photograph by Paula Álvarez, Courtesy ARTifariti)

Above: Artist Robin Kahn bakes a loaf of bread in the desert outside of Tifariti, Western Sahara, as part of *Dining in Refugee Camps: The Art of Sahrawi Cooking* (Courtesy ARTifariti).

PAUL GLOVER ITHACA HOURS

1991–

In Ithaca, New York, you can mow a lawn to pay for a movie ticket, or change a light bulb for a cup of coffee—not through direct barter, but by using a local alternative currency called *Ithaca HOURS*. Nearly 500 businesses, including banks, contractors, restaurants, hospitals, landlords, farmer's markets, and the local Chamber of Commerce, accept *HOURS*, which are worth 10 dollars, or roughly the average pay in Ithaca. Since its inception, over 110,000 *HOURS* have been issued, and millions of dollars in value have been traded through the system, which is locally referred to as the "Grassroots National Product." The bills are counterfeit-proof, serialized notes, produced in denominations of 2 HRS, 1 HR, 1/2 HR, 1/4 HR, 1/8 HR, and 1/10 HR.

Author and activist Paul Glover created the *Ithaca HOURS* system in 1991 as a way to strengthen the local economy by backing it with community labor, rather than national debt. Since the tender is only valid within a 20-mile radius, trade is limited to residents and businesses within the region; to that end, the currency promotes local shopping and reduces dependence on transport fuels. "*HOURS* reminds us that wealth comes from labor, and everyone deserves fair pay," Glover writes on his website. "We printed our own money because we watched Federal dollars come to town, shake a few hands, then leave to buy rainforest lumber and fight wars. Ithaca's *HOURS*, by contrast, stay in our region to help us hire each other. While dollars make us increasingly dependent on transnational corporations and bankers, *HOURS* reinforce community trading and expand commerce which is more accountable to our concerns for ecology and social justice." *Ithaca HOURS* is one of the largest, and oldest, alternative currencies in the United States.



Top to bottom: Ithaca HOURS are printed in five denominations (Courtesy Paul Glover). Glover, along with artist Jim Houghton, created a cartoon that explains the purpose and use of HOURS (Designed by Paul Glover, Art by Jim Houghton).

JOSH GREENE SERVICE-WORKS

2006—

For the past ten years, Josh Greene has been working both as an artist and a waiter in a high-end San Francisco restaurant. One night a month, Greene donates his tips—between \$200 and \$300—to another artist through his micro-granting project *Service-Works*. Approximately twenty-five applicants a month submit pitches to the program through Greene's website. He underwrites one proposal per round and displays the idea online. Greene is the sole juror, and the application process for *Service-Works*, unlike those

of most foundations or government funding agencies, requires only a simple project description sent in the body of an email message, and an itemized budget. While anyone is eligible for a stipend, those awarded grants are typically projects that can be realized with roughly \$300, within three weeks, and are in tandem with Greene's personal interests in "exchange, interaction, storytelling, and problem solving."

"I have a particular fondness for projects that grow out of and deal with real-life situations, be they political, personal, or environmental," Greene says. "I also enjoy work that incorporates risk, humor, pathos, and absurdity."

Some of the projects Greene has funded include a mobile replica of a front stoop that fostered impromptu conversations in Nashville, Tennessee; a call for writers requesting impersonations of George W. Bush lamenting his presidency's failures; and a cake party for first graders. Each entry on the *Service-Works* website includes a brief narrative about how Greene earned the money that went toward the project. While the projects he funds are disparate in content and form, each reflects his interest in connecting his labor to an artist's work.

Tina Heringer

A 273 Dollar Project



Tina Heringer bartered two paintings of the Fair Oaks area for the Lind Brothers Mortuary in exchange for the cremation of her father.

The Making of 273 Dollars

I am fairly certain that this new job is not for me. After my first night of training I found myself longing for my old job. I went as far as contacting my former manager and seeing if I could have my old job back. He said he filled my spot.

A few weeks have gone by since that first night of training and there have been moments in which I have felt that everything would be ok. I reason with myself that my discontent has to do with it being a new situation. But in a way, this is the opposite of reason. I have been the new guy a couple of handfuls of times in my service-industry career and usually the beginning stages of jobs are characterized by excitement as opposed to dislike.

This night did not stand out in any particular way except at the end of the shift I told myself that after tomorrow night's shift - my last one before a two-week vacation- I will tell them that it is not working out for me and give my notice.

Above: With Greene's \$273 grant, Tina Heringer made paintings to barter with a mortuary in exchange for the cremation of her father (Courtesy Josh Greene).

FRITZ HAEG SUNDOWN SALON

2001–2006

Los Angeles-based artist and architect Fritz Haeg bridges public and private spheres in his inclusive, community-oriented actions. For his *Edible Estates* project in 2005, he replaced suburban lawns—the ultimate modernist moat—with gardens full of native plants that encouraged neighbors to talk to each other, use their properties communally, and grow the land into an environmentally productive space. Likewise, his *Animal Estates* (2008) were homes for animals that had been displaced by humans, usually situated on the premises of commissioning museums. These makeshift sanctuaries included a beaver pond located in a courtyard and an eagles' nest placed in an outdoor foyer.

From 2001 to 2006, Haeg used his own estate, a geodesic dome on Los Angeles' Sundown Drive, to host semi-public gatherings of artists, neighbors, and other collaborators in which participants gardened, knitted, read poems, played music, organized pageants, performed yoga, showed visual art work, screened films, and simply exchanged ideas. These so-called *Sundown Salons*, which began as a small group of friends, expanded to include a wide range of artists including My Barbarian, Pipilotti Rist, Eve Fowler, Chris Abani, and Assume Vivid Astro Focus, among others. "The salons provided an alternative to the isolated solitary creator in the studio. Instead, the salon celebrated the truly engaged human, responding to their time, environment, community, friends, neighbors, weather, history, place," Haeg writes.

Haeg, via *Sundown Salon*, also staged similar events at the Schindler House in West Hollywood in collaboration with the MAK Center. In September 2006, after thirty events, *Sundown Salon* was converted into *Sundown Schoolhouse*, an alternative art school where "public interaction, physical connectedness, and responsiveness to place are valued above all else."



Above: *Sundown Salon* #29 (*Dancing Convention*, July 9, 2006) was a dance workshop that took place in a geodesic dome (Photograph by Fritz Haeg).



Top row: Sundown Salon #11 (February 22, 2004, organized with Sabrina Gschwandtner & Sara Grady) was a celebration of extreme knitting, art, craft, and the handmade, where guests were invited to wear things they made and bring projects to work on (Photograph by Jeaneann Lund).

Bottom: Sundown Salon #28 (Young Ones, June 18, 2006) was organized with Joyce Campbell and Iris Regn as an opportunity for local children to participate in salon events and projects, and for parents and children to establish a like-minded local network (Photograph by Fritz Haeg).

HAHA FLOOD

1992–1995

In 1992, the collective Haha planted a hydroponic garden that grew therapeutic herbs and leafy, green vegetables in an empty Chicago storefront, and distributed the produce on a weekly basis to local AIDS and HIV patients. From the sidewalk, the long rows of small plants, boxed in perforated containers under artificial lights, looked more like a scientific laboratory than a functioning garden. Yet for Laurie Palmer, a founding member of Haha, the interconnected plastic tubes captured the spirit of community, and that of the human body itself—"Complex, intricate networks," she says, "which were at the basis of all of our interventions." Unlike outdoor gardens, hydroponic gardens transport nutrients and min-

erals through water, not soil. The resulting aseptic conditions have proven to be safer for those with immunodeficiency disorders. The vegetables that Haha grew—including spinach, kale, arugula, and collard greens—also contained anti-oxidants that could possibly enhance the effectiveness of treatments.

With the help of a network of thirty neighborhood volunteers, Haha transformed the garden into a vast resource hub for the AIDS/HIV community, which they intended to hand off to a social service organization at the end of their temporary project, *Flood*. The group held lectures and workshops, provided informational materials, and offered the storefront as a meeting space and public forum for discussion about sex education, contraceptives, nutrition, treatment, healthcare, and questions of personal and collective identity.

Flood was commissioned by Sculpture Chicago's seminal exhibition, *Culture in Action*, a two-year project that helped transform the role of audience in public art from spectator to participant. "We were already interested in creating change through our work as artists," Palmer says. "And believed that incremental change was the fine-grained substrate that would make it happen."





Opposite. Haha took over a vacated storefront on Greenleaf Street, where they planted a hydroponic garden to provide produce for local AIDS and HIV patients (Photograph by Haha, Courtesy Sculpture Chicago).

Above: A school group helps with the storefront community hydroponic garden on Greenleaf Street in Chicago's North Side (Photograph by Haha, Courtesy Sculpture Chicago).

HELENA PRODUCCIONES FESTIVAL DE PERFORMANCE DE CALI

1997–2008

For eleven years, Helena Producciones' *Festival de Performance de Cali* played a key role in the cultural life of Cali, Colombia, a city with a notable shortage of resources and support networks for the arts. The festival provided a forum for both emerging and established international artists to create performances that were interactive and politically motivated, and defied traditional boundaries between artist and audience. Artists were invited to participate by invitation and through an open call for submissions. The five-day festival would also include workshops, street interventions, and talks held in various cul-

tural centers throughout the city—from public plazas to modest artist-run spaces. Examples of past performances include Spanish artist Santiago Sierra's installation of an enormous American flag on the wall of the Tertulia Museum; French artist Pierre Pinoncelli's amputation of his pinkie finger in protest of the kidnapping of 2002 presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt; and a concert by Las Malas Amistades, a Casiotone art school band whose independently produced CDs have attained cult status among college students.

Helena Producciones is a nonprofit, multidisciplinary collective that expands definitions of visual art by organizing events that promote local culture and community-initiated activism. The collective, which includes artists Wilson Díaz, Ana María Millán, Andrés Sandoval, Claudia Patricia Sarria, and Juan David Medina, often offers institutional critique through its work, as well as perspectives on local conditions, alternative to the routine social and economic conflict endemic in Colombia. The collective was also responsible for *Loop*, a semi-weekly television program that aired in Cali from 2000-2001 and mimicked the variety show format in order to report on the activities of local artists and punk bands.



Above: Members of the Puerto Tejada school of fencing compete in a match using machetes (Courtesy Helena Producciones).

**STEPHEN HOBBS AND
MARCUS NEUSTETTER**
**URBANET – HILLBROW/
DAKAR/HILLBROW**

2006



While conducting site research for an urban redevelopment project in Johannesburg, South Africa, Stephen Hobbs and Marcus Neustetter were stopped at the Hillbrow border by two franco-phone immigrants, who warned the artists against entering the inner-city neighborhood with a camera—suggesting that it might be stolen. Inspired by the exchange, Hobbs and Neustetter asked a group of Senegalese immigrants to draw maps of Dakar, which the artists then used to navigate the city during their two-week residency in May 2006. The project, titled *UrbaNET – Hillbrow/Dakar/Hillbrow*, became their collective contribution to the Dak'Art Biennale fringe program "Dak'Art OFF." The resulting exhibition, held at the Ker Thioissane residency space, was comprised of wall paintings of the maps and projections of photographic stills that reflected Hobbs' and Neustetter's tour of Dakar on foot and documented their interactions with people they met along the way.

The exhibition was designed as a reflection on racial and ethnic changes in the social fabric of Dakar and in the artists' hometown of Johannesburg. *UrbaNET* was included in Johannesburg's "Sightings/Site-ings of the African City" conference, held at the Wits Institute of Social and Economic Research in June 2006. The project's last iteration was an audio-visual presentation and discussion forum in which Senegalese immigrants were able to examine and compare the findings from Johannesburg and Dakar.

Top to bottom: Attendees enjoy the Seventh Festival de Performance de Cali in 2008. For the Coco Show, a market event organized by Helena Producciones, artisans displayed and sold their products in the main street in Cali. (Courtesy Helena Producciones)

FRAN ILICH SPACEBANK

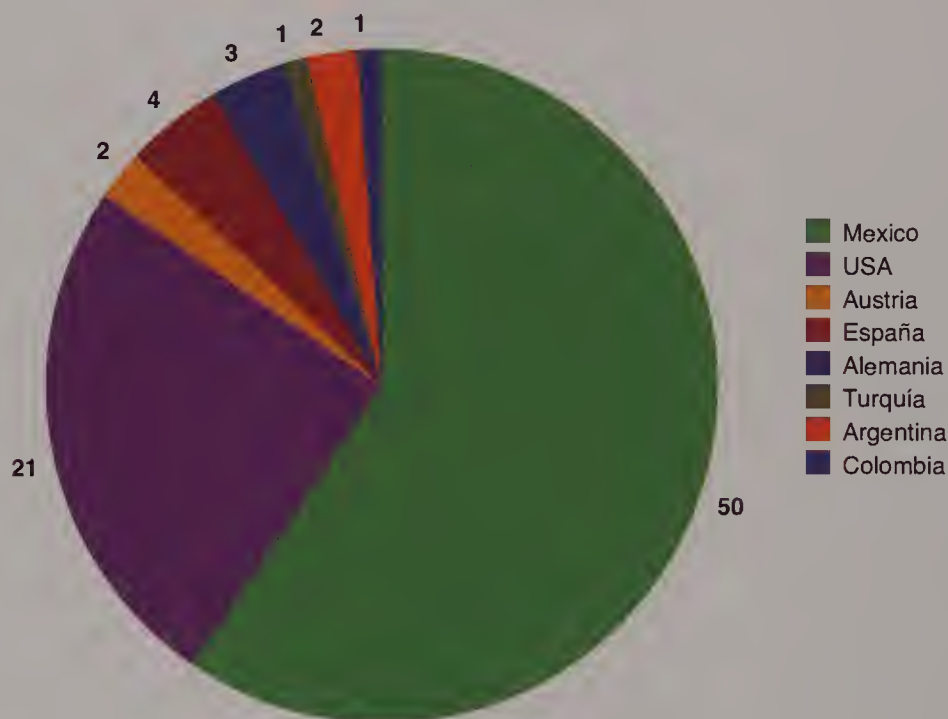
2005—

Spacebank is a virtual community investment bank that uses traditional capitalist trading structures in tandem with an alternate, fictional currency in order to promote anti-capitalist values. *Spacebank* clients can open functioning bank accounts, invest in established stock exchanges, buy bonds, and trade, all using the Digital Maoist Sunflower network currency, which is backed by

the labor of its founder, Fran Ilich, a media artist, writer, and activist. The *Spacebank* network allows participants to "purify their money" by investing in socially conscious projects involving art and activism, including a community farmers market, through a micro-financing program. As *Spacebank's* mission states, "We help you reach your objectives ... without hurting others."

Ilich operates *Spacebank* under his umbrella D.I.Y. media conglomerate Diego de la Vega, which takes its name from the 'true' identity of the fictional pulp character Zorro. Diego de la Vega, a limited liability corporation that Ilich started with fifty pesos, now hosts a web server (Possibleworlds.org), a research and development initiative on narrative media (Ficcion.de), a collective online radio (Radiolatina.am), a community newspaper (elzorro.org), and a think-tank called Collective Intelligence Agency (ci-a.info).

Cuentas en Spacebank



Above: Although account holders are located primarily in Mexico, people from all over the world have opened Spacebank accounts (Courtesy Fran Ilich).

TELLERVO KALLEINEN AND OLIVER KOCHTA-KALLEINEN

COMPLAINTS CHOIR

2005–



As organizers of *Complaints Choir*, Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen have heard it all: "My dreams are boring." "My grandmother is a racist." "My neighbor organizes Hungarian folk dances above my bedroom." "I am fat and lazy and half-old." Since 2005, the artists, who live in Helsinki, Finland, have invited people to sing their gripes in unison, in public, and online. The process is simple. First, invite others. Then, find a good musician. Once complaints are collected, written in verse, and rehearsed, participants are asked to record a public performance and submit it to the *Complaints Choir* website, a warehouse for songs with submissions from Japan to Chicago. Complaints include the overtly political—for example, social injustices in a small, Brazilian town—to the deeply personal, like having too much sex on the brain. "The private, the personal, can be very political," Kalleinen and

Top to bottom: The Complaints Choir of St. Petersburg performing in 2006 (Photograph by Yuriy Rumiantsev). The Complaints Choir of Helsinki rehearses in 2006 (Photograph by Heidi Piironen).

Kochta-Kalleinen write on their website. "'I have too much time!' can be seen as a personal tragedy, but also points to a major defect in capitalistic society, which sidelines people because they are of no use in the production cycle." In Cairo, Egypt, a recent complaints choir drew so much interest and such large crowds, that it evolved into the "Choir Project," an ongoing, local version that generates reflections and concerns about political conditions in the region.

Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen make work that often documents daily experiences, such as on-the-job mishaps, and doctor-patient relationships. The artists first got the idea for *Complaints Choir* while living in Finland, where the word for those who complain literally translates to "complaint choir." They compiled their first choir in Birmingham, England, with the help of two arts organizations; since then, over seventy choirs have formed around the world.



AMAL KENAWY

SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

2010

In December 2010, while citizens across the Middle East rose in widespread political unrest, fifteen men and women crawled across a busy Cairo intersection on their hands and knees, at the instruction of Egyptian artist Amal Kenawy. The performers, who included Kenawy's brother, a curator, and a dozen hired day laborers, moved slowly in a single file line, impeding traffic and drawing a large, emotionally charged crowd. Some passersby were annoyed by the halt of midday travel; others protested the potential critique of the state that triggered the act, as well as the submissive behavior of the men in line. Many people filmed and photographed the performance, which took place during the opening of 25th Alexandria Biennale and an international curatorial workshop in Cairo, organized by Tate. The artist and participants were eventually arrested, and briefly imprisoned, once heated tempers turned violent. On the surface, the action seemed to simply jar the daily routine of people on the street; yet, their ensuing reactions reflected an underlying conservatism, and undercurrent of tension rampant in the region.

Kenawy's *Silence of the Lambs* was commissioned for the exhibition *Assume the Position* at Cairo's Townhouse Gallery for Contemporary Art, and included photographs and videos as well as newspaper clippings of the event. The performance was scheduled to occur twice, marking the

opening and closing of the exhibition. However, the second iteration was cancelled before the show's end, in fear of inciting further conflict on the street.

SURASI KUSOLWONG

MINIMAL FACTORY/ (\$1 MARKET)/ RED BULL PARTY (WITH D.J.)

2002

Black Friday. Christmas Eve. End-of-season sales. If you've ever visited a shopping mall, a department store, or an outlet center you've experienced the frenzy and emotional high of material consumption that fascinates Thai artist Surasi Kusolwong. Imagine a dimly-lit, factory-like space scattered with long tables in primary colors. Each table is heaped with a seemingly random assortment of goods, like a clandestine rummage sale: washing baskets, soup ladles, footballs, space invader machines, inflatable toys, and footballs. As you peruse the space, a DJ pumps loud, energetic dance music and a counter offers cold cans of Red Bull. Other shoppers swarm over the abundance of goods, piling baskets high with colorful items, all on sale for \$1 each.

This is Kusolwong's *Minimal Factory/(\$1 Market)/Red Bull Party (with D.J.)*, part of his touring *Market* project. Exploring the intersection of art, consumption, and community, Kusolwong



recreates a typical Thai market with cheap goods purchased *en masse* in Bangkok. As shoppers fawn over the Thai-manufacture goods—made precious by their exotic origin and the gallery setting—Kusolwong intends the thumping music and beverage service to draw out the social interactions inherent to the consumer experience.

Kusolwong's practice navigates between public and private spaces, playing with concepts of both economic and cultural values, and the dialogue between people, art, and consumer prod-

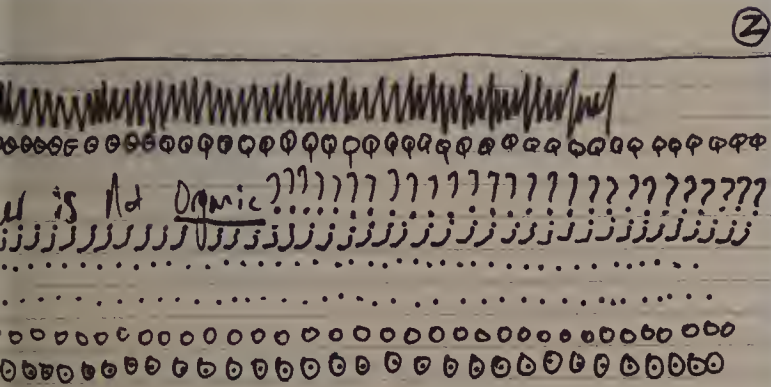
ucts. His interactive installation *Golden Ghost (The Future Belongs To Ghosts)*, which was commissioned for Creative Time's 2011 exhibition *Living as Form*, was composed of large piles of multicolored, tangled thread waste—a byproduct of textile production. Hidden within the thread waste were gold necklaces designed by the artist. Visitors were invited to dig through the sea of delicate knots in search of the jewelry. Every week, the artist added another piece of jewelry to what he called the "economic landscape."

Top to bottom: At the 1 Euro Blinky Market (Dumme Kiste) in 2006 at Westfaelische Kunstverein, Münster, Germany, over 2,000 everyday objects from Thailand were sold for one euro each. For the Cork Caucus in 2005, Kusolwong invited various local market vendors to take part in 1 Euro BangCork Market, which took place over three days. (Courtesy of Surasi Kusolwong)

Top to bottom: 1,000 Lire Market (*La vita continua*), 2001, featured various everyday objects sold for 1,000 Lire in the main square of Casole d'Elsa, Siena, Italy. The 10 Kronor Market (*ohne die Rose tun wir's nicht*) featured Thai goods for sale for ten Kronor each at the Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö, Sweden, in 2004. (Courtesy of Surasi Kusolwong)

BRONWYN LACE AND ANTHEA MOYS EN MASSE

2010—



The first step in solving problems may be learning how to talk about them, and by appreciating what Johannesburg-based artists Anthea Moys and Bronwyn Lace consider to be the vastly underappreciated components of the creative process: “those aspects of becoming inspired, brainstorming, sharing, and debating.” In 2010, they launched *En Masse*, a several-year, multi-step effort to suggest working models for environmental activism by first bringing together a group of forty-nine artists, architects, science educators, engineers, and curators at the Bag Factory Artists’ Studios, where Lace serves as education director—then implementing their ideas in subsequent phases. Attendees of these initial workshops participated in eight three-hour conversations. Lace and Moys presented the results of the workshop sessions in an exhibition, which included installations, audio recordings of the conversations, drawings, and textual documentation.

The discussions and exhibition in 2010 introduced participants to one another and then encouraged people to develop ideas in collaboration. For example, Metro Mass—a proposed solution to Johannesburg’s problematic public transportation—calls for over 5,000 suburbanites from the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Area to give up their vehicles on a given day.



Top: Lace and Moys produced a series of workshops, exhibitions, performances, and a book. Bottom row: The installation of *En Masse* included linked text and images (Courtesy Bronwyn Lace and Anthea Moys).

SUZANNE LACY THE ROOF IS ON FIRE

1994

For one afternoon in 1994, two hundred and twenty high school students in Oakland, California, sat in parked cars on a rooftop garage and talked to each other about violence, sex, gender, family, and race. The teens spoke candidly, without any kind of script, while an audience of nearly one thousand people—including numerous reporters and camera crews—walked from car to car, leaning in and bending over, to hear their conversations through rolled-down windows. The resulting footage of the performance, called *The Roof Is On Fire*, was aired locally on multiple networks and nationally on CNN.

Oakland teens were already accustomed to receiving media attention, though largely through

negative portrayals of young people involved in riots, violence, and conflicts with police. This event, however, which was organized by artist Suzanne Lacy in conjunction with TEAM (a group of teens, educators, artists, and media workers), was designed as a positive media spectacle, with young people depicted as citizens rather than liabilities. For five months, Lacy met weekly with teachers and teens, including those from a nearby probation program, to discuss issues important to them, and to craft a message for civic leaders about the role of young people in Oakland's future. *The Roof Is On Fire* reflected the crux of those discussions, as well as Lacy's decades-long mission to counter misleading media images with empowered, community-oriented actions. Since the 1970s, she has created performances that offer alternative narratives and interpretations of news coverage. For example, *In Mourning and In Rage* presented a public ritual on the steps of Los Angeles' City Hall in response to coverage of the murders of 10 women in December 1977. While the stories focused on the random nature of the violence, Lacy's collaborative performance was a call to action, and reframing of the killing spree from a feminist perspective.



Above: Four Oakland teens that participated in Lacy's *The Roof Is On Fire* candidly discuss pressing topics while an audience listens in (Courtesy Suzanne Lacy).



Above: *The Roof Is On Fire* took place on the rooftop of an Oakland parking garage one evening in 1994 (Courtesy Suzanne Lacy).

LAND FOUNDATION THE LAND

1998–

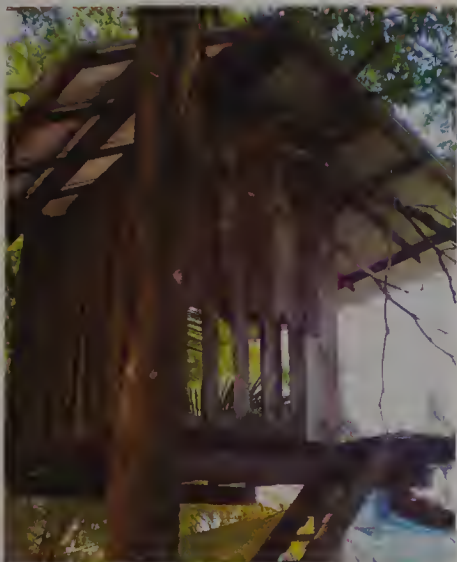
In 1998, artists Rirkrit Tiravanija and Kamin Lertchaiprasert bought a rice field in Sanpatong, a village 20 minutes outside of Chiang Mai, Thailand. At the time, flooding in the area had rendered rice cultivation difficult; instead, they began cultivating, and experimenting with, notions of utopian, socially responsible living. *The Land* became a testing ground for meditation and ideas, such as ecologically conscious systems that don't rely on the use of electricity or gas, but call for self-sufficiency, sustainable practices, and natural resources. For example, harnessing bio-mass (or fecal matter) to generate power; creating fishing ponds filled with purified water; building kitchens modeled to support communal living; and installing meditation rooms.

Since purchasing the property, they have invited artists from around the world, including SUPERFLEX, Tobias Rehberger, Philippe Parreno and François Roche, to create projects and to build housing structures on *The Land*. They also began growing rice once the ground was viable again, and donated the food to local villages—communities that have been ravaged by the AIDS epidemic in the region.

Tiravanija is best known for cooking and serving Pad Thai to visitors of a Soho gallery (one of the first instances of so-called "relational aesthetics" that engages audiences as participants instead of viewers) while Lertchaiprasert's art often explores the daily rituals, disciplines, and values of Buddhism. Though the artists continue to live on *The Land*, operations are managed by *The Land Foundation*—an independent, anonymous group—in an effort to disperse ownership among the space's users, visitors, and inhabitants.



Top to bottom: American artist Robert Peters and Thai artist Thasnai Sethaseree designed *Asian Provision*. Lin Yilin's *Whose Land? Whose Art?* consisted of two walls, one constructed in the countryside in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and the other in a Bangkok gallery. Farming at the Land Foundation is open to those who wish to learn. (Courtesy The Land Foundation)



Top to bottom: German architect and installation artist Markus Heinsdorff designed the *Living Bamboo Dome*, which will regenerate by means of renewable construction approximately every three years. *Angkrit's House*, a simple structure for one person designed by Thai artist Angkrit Ajchariyasophon, was inspired by housing for Buddhist priests at a monastery in Chiang-Rai, Thailand. (Courtesy The Land Foundation)

Top to bottom: Rice paddy farming is organized in a two-crop annual cycle. *Somyot & Thavijit's House*, by Thai artists Somyot Hananuntasak and Thavijit Poengkasemsom, was conceived as a venue for sharing ideas and designed to accommodate a staging area for performances. A Buddhist farming concept inspires the agricultural layout of the rice paddies—only one quarter of the area is solid ground while the other three are water, similar to the composition of the human body. (Courtesy The Land Foundation)

LONG MARCH PROJECT HO CHI MINH TRAIL

2008–2011

In 2008, the Beijing-based art collective Long March Project launched an expedition across the Ho Chi Minh Trail, originally a secret system of jungle pathways during the Vietnam War. For this trip, also called *Ho Chi Minh Trail*, Long March invited international and local curators, artists, scholars, and students to re-walk part of the trail while participating in panel discussions, visual art collaborations, and other creative actions in cities on the itinerary. Understanding that history is as complex and branched as the 600-mile path, Long March's program uses the trail as a point of entry into dialogue about Vietnam's past and present. "Though internationally understood as a logistical supply route created during the

Second Indochina War, [the trail] formed a vast network of passageways across China, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia," Long March writes. Their *Ho Chi Minh Trail* was envisioned as a "nomadic residency," in these same countries, as well as their international diasporas, with the goal of exploring interactions the legacy of interactions among the regions: "How can sensitive misgivings between cultural and social communities be creatively engaged so as to create new identifications, and new possibilities of beneficial engagement where ... prejudices are laid aside?"

Founded by artist and writer Lu Jie, Long March Project takes its name from the historic military retreat of the Chinese Red Army from nationalist troops in 1945. In 2002, the collective toured the 6,000-mile historical stretch; called *A Walking Visual Display*, Long March brought together 250 artists, curators, writers, theorists, and scholars in public parks, community halls, private living rooms, and government offices to discuss topics such as the "ideological legacy of the Cultural Revolution," and "the birth of Communism." The trip was documented through photography, installations, painting, performances, symposia, and other forums.



Above: The Long March Project uses the geographical pathway of the Ho Chi Minh trail to reexamine China's socialist and revolutionary past (Courtesy Long March Project).

LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT AGENTS & ASSETS

2001—

Los Angeles Poverty Department is a 26-year-old theater company that employs homeless actors living on the city's Skid Row, one of the largest homeless populations in the country. In 2001, LAPD produced *Agents & Assets*, a staged performance of the "Report on the Central Intelligence Agency's Alleged Involvement in Crack Cocaine Trafficking in Los Angeles"—transcripts that were presented to the House of Representatives after

the *LA Times* launched an investigation into the charges. Though the CIA was eventually acquitted, the LAPD's production explored the implications of high-level profiteering by enlisting homeless actors to perform as Congress members and CIA officials. Each performance was followed by discussions between law-enforcement officials, audience members, and the actors involved.

In 1985, actor John Malpede founded, and still continues to direct, LAPD, the first performance group in the nation comprised primarily of homeless and formerly homeless people, giving this often silent community a voice and platform to speak—not simply about the experience of being homeless, but about the political and civic conditions that create poverty, as well as areas such as Skid Row. Malpede had worked with, and advocated for the rights of, homeless populations in New York. The theater company began as an improvisational group, and now primarily produces scripted works that address injustices within the criminal justice system. LAPD's productions are often site-specific installations, as well as public projects with educational programming.



Above: *Agents and Assets* being performed in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in 2009.
(Photograph by Henriëtte Brouwers).

MAMMALIAN DIVING REFLEX HAIRCUTS BY CHILDREN

2006

For one day, fifth- and sixth-grade students from Toronto's Parkdale Public School provided haircuts, free of charge, in hair salons across the city. Using the tresses of mannequin heads, they trained for one week with professional stylists, learning how to trim bangs, add color, shave necklines, create long layers, and use a blow dryer. While adults provided supervision during the sessions, most patrons trusted the novice hairdressers, who worked in pairs or groups, to make aesthetic decisions like color choices and hair length, on their own. The project, which later traveled internationally, culminated in a two-day series of performances at the Milk International Children's Festival of the Arts back in Toronto.

Haircuts By Children was organized by Mammalian Diving Reflex, a Toronto-based arts and research group that creates very specific interactions between people in public spaces. For *Out of My League*, participants were asked to approach strangers who they believed were 'out of their league' and engage in conversation with them. *Slow Dance with Teacher* made high-school teachers available for one night to slow dance with their students. The group's name is inspired by a self-preservation technique triggered by extreme physical duress. For example, when the body is suddenly submerged in water or caught in a freezing environment, all major bodily functions slow almost to a halt, minimizing the need for oxygen, and increasing the chances of survival. To that end, *Haircuts* leveraged the image of children per-



forming a highly specialized, and personal, form or labor, as well as the often-precocious nature of 10- to 12-year-olds, to convey a larger message: If children can be empowered as creative thinkers and decision makers, shouldn't they be allowed to vote, too?

Above: A woman enjoys a free haircut from students in Parkdale Public School's 5th and 6th grade classes. *Opposite:* Stan Bevington receives a haircut from Amahayes Mulugeta and Dailia Linton. (Photographs by John Lauener)



MARDI GRAS INDIAN COMMUNITY FUNERAL PROCESSION FOR BIG CHIEF ALLISON "TOOTIE" MONTANA

2005

Since the 1800s, working-class Blacks in New Orleans paid tribute to Native Americans who aided escaped slaves on their routes to safety by "masking Indian": building and donning elaborate costumes for Mardi Gras, fashioned from layers upon layers of feathers, beads, sequins, and billowing fabrics dyed in energetic colors. For 52 years, Allison "Tootie" Montana, a construction worker and chief of the chiefs of these Mardi Gras

Indians, lead the parade: His signature, three-dimensional geometric designs often weighed hundreds of pounds, costs thousands of dollars, and earned him a National Endowments for the Arts grant, and was the subject of feature-length documentary. On July 10, 2005, thousands New Orleans residents gathered to march in his funeral procession, out of respect for his art, and his advocacy for this community.

Montana was a long-time, outspoken advocate for Mardi Gras Indians, who often faced discrimination from local law enforcement. On the night of his death, he addressed the City Council, along with other chiefs, to protest police brutality, as well as efforts to squash Mardi Gras Indian parades and other public gatherings. Moments later he collapsed on the floor, and was taken to a nearby hospital, where he was pronounced dead of a heart attack. His funeral procession, which drew both non-Indians and Indians, was one of the largest to trickle down the well-known parade route from the church to the cemetery; participants beat tambourines, chanted, and moved like rhythmic clouds of aqua, orange, red, and yellow smoke.



Above: Members of The Baby Dolls pay their respect to Big Chief Allison "Tootie" Montana (Photograph by Keith Calhoun).

Opposite, top to bottom: Mardi Gras Indians attend the funeral of Big Chief Allison "Tootie" Montana. The funeral took place in Tremé, and a large part of the community turned out to pay their respects. (Photographs by Keith Calhoun)



ANGELA MELITOPOULOS AND COLLABORATORS TIMESCAPES/B-ZONE

2005–2006

For three years, video artists and activists from Germany (Angela Melitopoulos and Hito Steyerl), Serbia (Dragana Zarevac), Greece (Freddy Viannelis), and Turkey (Octay Ince and VideA) worked to build a shared video database called *Timescapes*, which uses non-linear editing to explore collective memory and alternative forms of filmic representation.

Through this experimental, collaborative media, the group explored themes of mobility and migration in “B-Zone territories”—political areas subject to mutations, wars, and conflicts that resulted from the rise of European infrastructure projects and new routes of migration after the fall of the Berlin Wall. These territories exist at the crossroads of three major political regions: Europe, the countries of the former Soviet Union, and the Arab-Islamic World.

Each of the collaborators participating in *Timescapes/B-Zones* hailed from locations along the “old” European axis between Berlin and Istanbul—one so-called B-Zone—and contributed images and visualizations that, combined, suggested a psychological landscape of that territory. Going beyond a simple accumulation of images and facts, the artists manipulate audio and visual content as a means of questioning the supposedly progressive capitalist ideology of integration. The process has yielded two projects: *Behind the Mountain* (70 min., 2005), a video essay on forced migration in Turkey, and *Corridor X* (124 min., 2006), a road movie that travels through the Tenth European Corridor between Germany and Turkey.



Timescapes/B-Zones was conceived of by artist Angela Melitopoulos, who creates time-based work, including experimental single-channel-tapes, video installations, video essays, documentaries, and sound pieces that focus on issues of migration, memory, and narrative.

Above: *Timescapes*' video database explores "B-Zone territories," which are the political areas affected by the fall of the Berlin Wall (Courtesy Angela Melitopoulos).

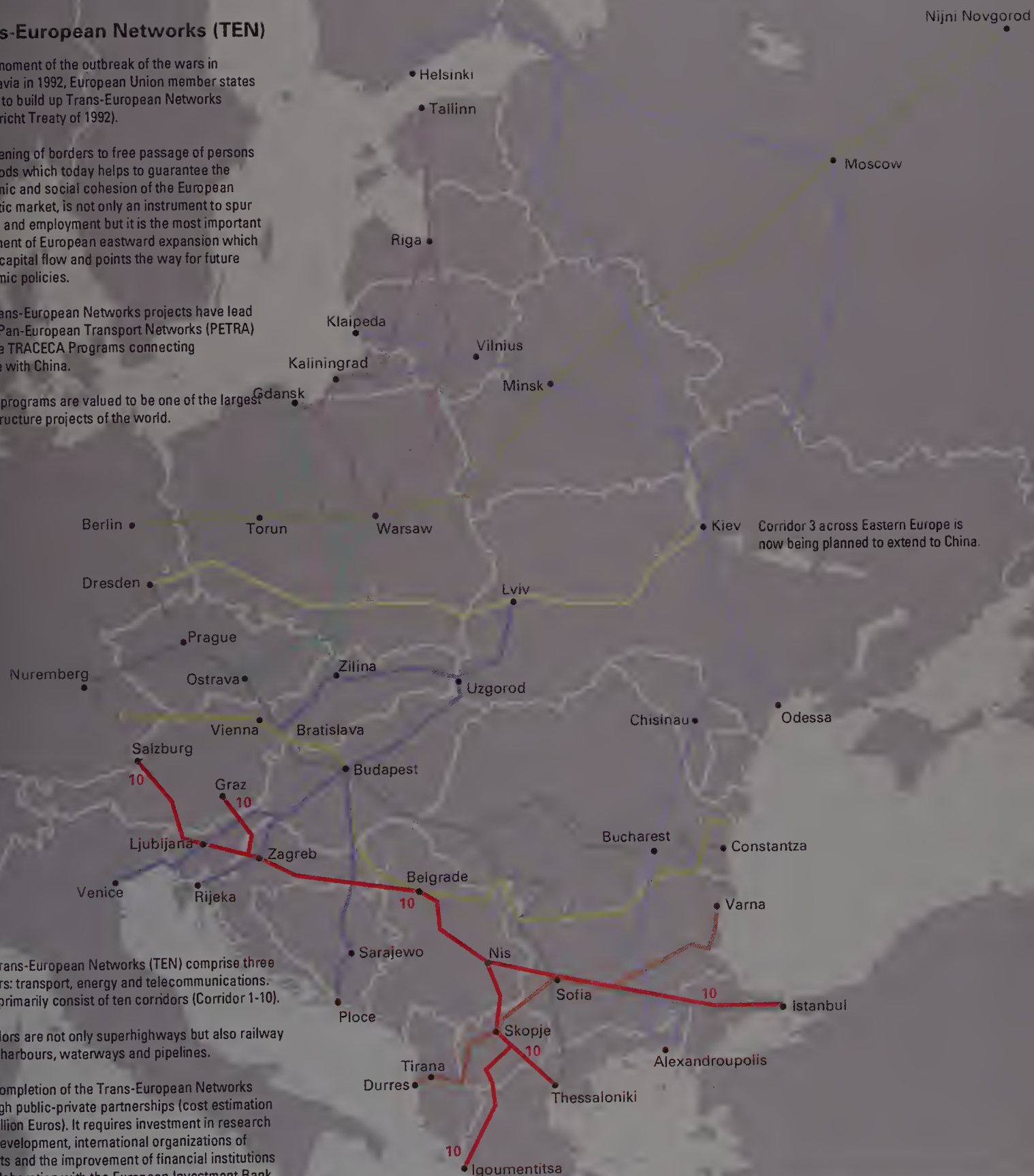
Trans-European Networks (TEN)

At the moment of the outbreak of the wars in Yugoslavia in 1992, European Union member states agreed to build up Trans-European Networks (Maastricht Treaty of 1992).

The opening of borders to free passage of persons and goods which today helps to guarantee the economic and social cohesion of the European domestic market, is not only an instrument to spur growth and employment but it is the most important instrument of European eastward expansion which drives capital flow and points the way for future economic policies.

The Trans-European Networks projects have lead to the Pan-European Transport Networks (PETRA) and the TRACECA Programs connecting Europe with China.

These programs are valued to be one of the largest infrastructure projects of the world.



The Trans-European Networks (TEN) comprise three sectors: transport, energy and telecommunications. They primarily consist of ten corridors (Corridor 1-10).

Corridors are not only superhighways but also railway lines, harbours, waterways and pipelines.

The completion of the Trans-European Networks through public-private partnerships (cost estimation 400 billion Euros). It requires investment in research and development, international organizations of experts and the improvement of financial institutions in collaboration with the European Investment Bank.

Above: The Trans-European Networks consists of ten corridors that connect parts of Eastern European (Courtesy Angela Melitopoulos).

ZAYD MINTY BLACK ARTS COLLECTIVE

1998–2003



In the late 1990s, South Africa-based cultural planner and researcher Zayd Minty became aware that artists in his home city lacked adequate spaces in which to openly discuss their practices. It was also clear that many black artists still felt invisible in post-Apartheid South Africa. According to one artist, who later worked with Minty, the city lacked “a place where I could feel both safe and intellectually stimulated...[a place] that allowed me to explore the complex and often contradictory race politics of post-1994 South Africa.” Drawing inspiration from the Robben Island Artist Residency Program and other successful artist

exchange programs, Minty founded the Black Arts Collective (BLAC) in late 1998 with an inaugural seminar held at the Old Granary building in Cape Town.

For five years, BLAC provided a forum for “discourse building” and explored issues of race, power, and identity through workshops, seminars, articles, public art projects, and a website. Intentionally temporary in its duration, BLAC aimed to address specific, local moments and concerns, sidestepping larger “grand narratives” about race relations. The loose collective of artists, working across media, met regularly to dis-

Top row, left to right: Donovan Ward's *Leisure Time* billboard sat opposite Guga S'thebe Multipurpose Centre in Langa, South Africa (Photograph by Nic Aldridge, Courtesy BLAC). Mustafa Maluka's postcard *Choice* was a part of *Returning the Gaze*, an exhibition in Cape Town in 2000 (Art by Mustafa Maluka, Courtesy BLAC).

Bottom row, left to right: A mural on Klipfontein Road was a part of *Returning the Gaze* (Photograph by Nic Aldridge, Courtesy BLAC). The *Leisure Time* billboard by Donovan Ward was designed for *Returning the Gaze* at the 2000 Cape Town One City Festival (Art by Donovan Ward, Courtesy BLAC).

cuss contemporary black identity, even at times questioning the use of the term at all.

The project adopted a three-fold strategy: to create discussions (through the seminar series and commissioning of articles), to document and publish (through the website project Blaonline), and to provide a platform for production. Several specific public exhibitions took place during this period, including the exhibition "Returning the Gaze" at the 2000 Cape Town One City Festival. The organization served as both an investigation into the cultural politics of black identity as it relates to art, and a professional resource for black artists in Cape Town.

THE MOBILE ACADEMY THE BLACKMARKET FOR USEFUL KNOWLEDGE AND NON-KNOWLEDGE

2005–

Visitors to *The Blackmarket for Useful Knowledge and Non-Knowledge* can book 30-minute sessions with experts on a range of subjects, from sex and politics to esoteric word games and the meaning of life. In the fashion of speed dating, student and teacher sit across from each other, separated by small, dimly lit tables, while crowds of people wander and eavesdrop in an effort to preview the discussions before choosing among the roughly 100 topics. This traveling event usu-

ally takes place in spaces associated with learning or communication, such as theaters or reading rooms—eschewing privileged transfers of knowledge for shared, non-hierarchical exchanges.

Organized by The Mobile Academy's curator Hannah Hurtzig, *Blackmarket* has occurred in Berlin, Istanbul, Liverpool, and Jaffa, among other locations. The Mobile Academy is an umbrella for projects she initiates with a rotating group of collaborators.

Hurtzig founded The Mobile Academy in 1999, after a long career in theater, particularly experimental German productions focused on disturbing the illusions inherent in representation, which influenced both *Blackmarket* and The Mobile Academy. For example, unscripted conversations with non-actors (like call-center workers and politicians); incorporating food in performances; and staging prohibitively long events that forces audiences to notice their own physical presence and responses. She creates public access to educational resources such as sound archives, film archives, and theater installations—projects with an educational, participatory bent.



Above: At the *Blackmarket for Useful Knowledge and Non-Knowledge* No. 10 in Vienna in 2008, up to 100 experts shared their knowledge with participants in half-hour increments (Photograph by Dorothea Wimmer).

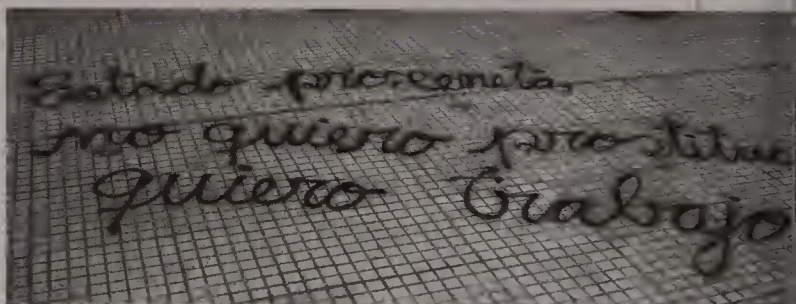
MUJERES CREANDO DUEDORAS

2001–

In 2001, over 6,000 people traveled from Bolivia's provinces to its capital La Paz to protest the loss of their businesses and homes, and ensuing bankruptcy, due to crippling interest rates on microcredit loans. Called Duedoras, or "debtors," this group of primarily low-income women occupied the streets while their family members, out of financial desperation, committed suicide back home. By July, the demonstrations, which had generated little response from the government, escalated: the Duedoras began taking hostages in city buildings, and engaged in violent confrontation with the police.

To mitigate the situation, and prompt negotiations, the self-described anarcho-feminist collective Mujeres Creando (Creative Women), began organizing peaceful activities that would allow the Duedoras to be heard publicly, while rebuilding relationships with stakeholders. This included the creation of a public mural bearing the paint-dipped footprints of protesters (which symbolized their long journey); a series of financial management courses; and other non-violent street actions.

Founded in 1992 by activists Julieta Paredes, María Galindo and Mónica Mendoza, Mujeres Creando are best known for their anti-capitalist messages disseminated as elegantly scripted, public graffiti. Since its inception, the collective has also published an independent newspaper, opened a café, and broadcast a public interest television program, while collaborating with universities, unions, and rural workers to devise challenges to corporate and neoliberal activities.



Above, top to bottom. Mujeres Creando intervene in a clash between insolvent Bolivian women and the police. The Mujeres Creando have developed the concept of Estado Proxeneta (Pimp State), as evidenced in this graffiti reading "Pimp State, I do not want prostitution, I want work." (Courtesy Mujeres Creando)



**NO QUIERO SER LA MADRE DE DIOS,
DE ESE DIOS BLANCO, CIVILIZADO Y CONQUISTADOR**



Above: The performance of Virgin Barbie was shown as part of the exhibition *Principio Potosí* (Courtesy Mujeres Creando)

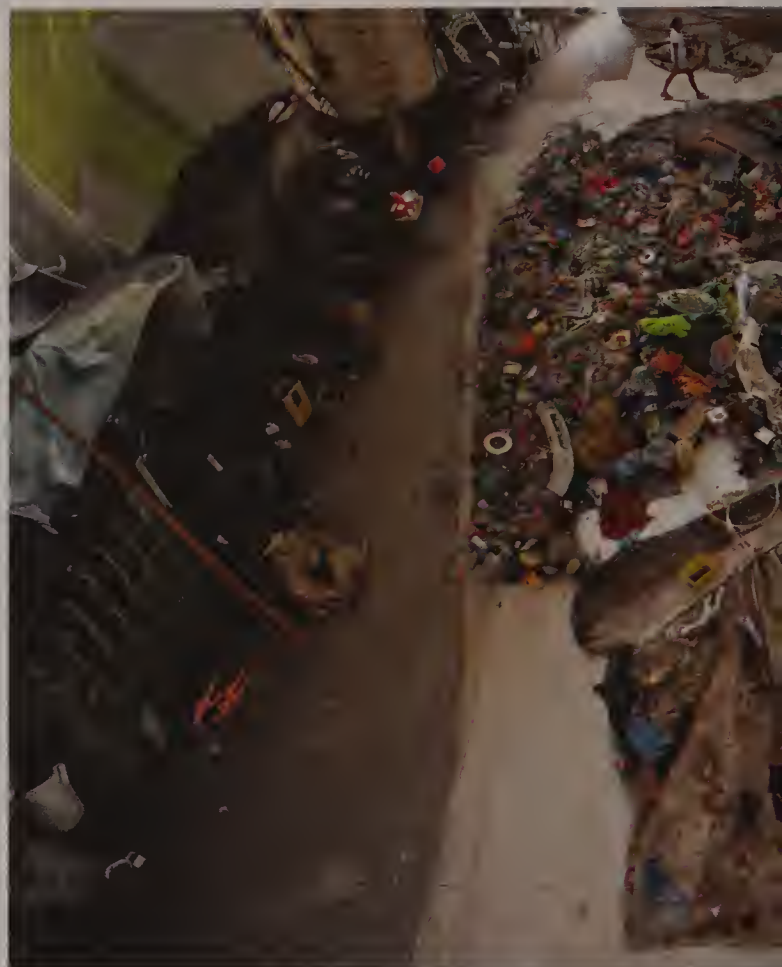
VIK MUNIZ PICTURES OF GARBAGE

2008

"What I want to be able to do is change the lives of people with the same materials they deal with every day," says artist Vik Muniz in *Wasteland*, a documentary film that follows the production of his photographic series *Pictures of Garbage*. In 2008, Muniz traveled to Brazil, where he was born and raised, to work with garbage pickers from Jardim Gramacho, a 321-acre, open-air dump, the largest in South America, located just outside of Rio. An informal and marginalized labor source, these workers scavenge the garbage that arrives daily, searching for recyclable items to sell. Muniz enlisted them to help him design, and then pose for, massive portraits composed of the collected detritus. The resulting works conjure classical portraiture in which his collaborators are elevated to mythical status amid the trash that looks deceptively like precious material, or thick, glimmering paint.

Muniz lifted more than just the workers' image through his art. He paid all participants for their time and contributed materials. He also auctioned off the works, and donated his share of the sales to the Garbage Pickers Association of Jardim Gramacho, the workers' representative body. Most significantly, he continued to collaborate with them to help enact a formal recycling program in Brazil, bring awareness of their labor to a wider public, and bolster a sense of dignity in this historically underrepresented community and more. In the past few years, plans to close Jardim Gramacho—and implement the first widespread, national recycling program in the country—have surfaced.

Pictures of Garbage typifies much of Muniz's work—near *trompe l'oeil* in his use of lay materials from syrup to peanut butter to figurines. To produce these photographs, which have been exhibited globally, he spent two years at the land-



Top: Muniz used material from a dump in Rio de Janeiro to create this enormous portrait of a *carlao*, a garbage picker, inspired by the *Farnese Atlas* sculpture (Courtesy Vik Muniz).



fill, a common practice for the Brooklyn-based artist who has been invested in supporting non-profit organizations in Brazil, particularly those that offer training and education to underserved children.

NAVIN PRODUCTION STUDIO MAHĀKĀD ART FESTIVAL: EPIC ARTS IN THE MARKET

2010–2011

Chiang Mai's Warorot Market, which dates back to the 19th century, is best characterized by the word "epic": The densely packed stalls and stores feature inexhaustible rows of wares, from vegetables and chickens to brightly dyed textiles and plastic knick-knacks. Likewise, the market's population has become an equally diverse cross-section of religious and ethnic identities over the years. Artist Navin Rawanchaikul grew up working in his family's fabric store amid the complex, cultural *mélange*. To celebrate the market's centennial anniversary, he organized an arts festival, called *Mahākād*, inspired by the market's history, that included site-specific installations and events as well as two-dimensional works such as historical photographs; portraits of its current inhabitants; and a vast, monochromatic mural depicting 200 community members. In reference to the international scope of the market, visitors were given maps of the space, and leaflets designed to look like "passports," which could be stamped at each art station. After receiving ten stamps, visitors were eligible to receive a free magazine that recounts *Mahākād*'s history. Directed by Rawanchaikul's Navin Production Studio, and in collaboration with several community groups, the festival's accompanying activities

Bottom: Rawanchaikul created a large-format panoramic photograph depicting more than 200 members of the Chiang Mai community—some living, some long dead (Courtesy Navin Rawanchaikul)

included workshops, a tour of the project sites led by Rawanchaikul and a panel discussion about community engagement in contemporary art practices. The festival's title references the ancient Indian text *Mahābhārata*—a complex, network of characters and plots that reflects the interwoven relationships embedded in the market.

Rawanchaikul uses the realm of the everyday as both the subject and venue of his art. He often creates his work under the banner of Navin Production Co., Ltd., his production company that he founded in 1994 and launched by producing bottled, polluted water from a canal in Chiang Mai. In 1995, he initiated "Navin Gallery Bangkok," his taxicab-turned-mobile art gallery.

NEUE SLOWENISCHE KUNST (NSK) EMBASSY IN MOSCOW

1992

Since 1984, Ljubljana, Slovenia-based art collective Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) has been creating paintings, posters, music, and manifestos designed to critique governments through incisive, satirical jabs. For example, NSK won a Yugoslavian youth poster contest by slyly alluding to a famous Nazi painting in its entry; tweaked Slovenia's national anthem by singing it in German while wearing military boots; and have repeatedly adopted the kitschy imagery and language of totalitarianism, from hammer-wielding workers to heavy-antlered deer, in their diverse works. In doing so, NSK—which consists of the band Laibach, visual art collective IRWIN, performers Noordung, and graphic designers New Collectivism—tries to dismantle these symbols



Top to bottom: NSK members and guests attend a gathering at the Moscow Embassy, which was established in a private apartment in 1992. In addition to hosting lectures and public discussions, the Moscow Embassy presented paintings, posters, design work, and videos. (Photographs by Jože Suhadolnik)

and the power structures they represent.

Yet NSK's subversive projects have also been sincere, political acts: In 1992, after Yugoslavia collapsed, the group virtually seceded from Slovenia to form "State in Time," its own utopian micronation. NSK produced national postage stamps, wrote an anthem, and issued passports seemingly authentic enough that hundreds of people used them to cross the border out of Sarajevo. The group also set up embassies in cities across Europe, beginning with its *Embassy in Moscow*, an event that launched the "State in Time" project. The *Embassy in Moscow* was modeled after an exhibition series titled *Apartment Art (or APT ART)*, which was first organized in the 1980s by underground Russian artists looking to escape official censorship by hosting events in private spaces. NSK revived this history in its own version—a month-long, live installation in a private apartment, bearing the emblem of a faux state embassy on the building's façade. The event featured lectures, talks, and visual works (primarily produced by members of IRWIN) meant to ignite public discussion about pressing social issues in Eastern Europe.

NUTS SOCIETY

1998–

Nuts Society, in Bangkok, Thailand, employs the language of marketing and consumerism—for example, selling clothing, creating window signage, and packaging products—to foster social consciousness and responsibility in daily practices. In 2002, the group printed the Thai alphabet on large sheets of paper and hung the posters in street-level windows. Called *A Page From Exercising Thai: A Learning Reform*, the project, commissioned by Art in General, aimed to teach passersby how to read the Thai alphabet, using words that represent basic values of social justice, such as "shared," "respect," and "tolerance." Infiltrating spaces in which one would expect to find advertising and eschewing the consumer maxim of "more," signage encouraged viewers to "be adequate, be sufficient, be enough." The poster design was eventually printed on t-shirts, which were sold in the storefront of a Cincinnati art gallery.

For *Nuts Society Tattoo Station*, Nuts Society built a tattoo parlor at the Alliance Française Center in Bangkok, through which they critiqued global consumerism's lack of moral values using uniquely designed tattoos. Other projects, like the Pandora Cookie Project, which fosters child development through the making of educational cookies, and *The New ABC of Learning* promote positive education through creative, direct engagement with language. Since forming in 1998, Nuts Society has worked anonymously and collectively in both public spaces and arts institutions with the mission of delivering earnest messages about civic and global life through humorous and playful images.



JOHN O'NEAL
**JUNEBUG PRODUCTIONS/
FREE SOUTHERN THEATER**

1980—

In 1963 actor, director, and playwright John O'Neal, a former member of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, founded the Free Southern Theater (FST), which introduced theater to rural, Southern communities through live performances, professional training opportunities, and audience engagement programs with the goal of exposing social injustices in African-American communities. Since then, O'Neal has been a leading advocate of the view that "politics" and "art" are complementary, not opposing terms. When the company dissolved in 1980, after decades of involvement in the social justice and Black Arts movements, Free Southern Theater's last production became the first of its successor, Junebug Productions.

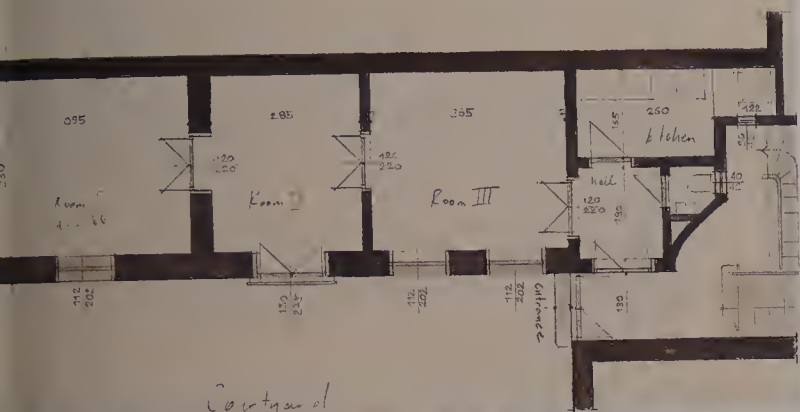
A New Orleans-based nonprofit, Junebug continues FST's tradition of developing theater, dance, music, and other performing arts that reflect the experiences of African Americans in the South by working with educators and organizers to produce community projects, and by supporting residencies with high-school students. The company, which was named after a character created by the SNCC, Junebug Jabbo Jones—a mythic storyteller who narrates the experience of life in the Deep South—continues to use the history of the Civil Rights Movement to explore contemporary issues addressing equality and justice, such as the disastrous social and economic conditions that took root after Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast in 2005. To that end, Junebug's plays are informed by O'Neal's longstanding belief that the work of artists can help the public better understand the notion of a "social conscience."



Top: O'Neal in a performance at Junebug Productions, which he founded in 1963 as a cultural arm of the Civil Rights Movement (Courtesy John O'Neal).

ODA PROJESİ APARTMENT PROJECT

2000–2005



In 2000, artists Özge Acıkkol, Günes Savas, and Secil Yersel, working as the artist collective Oda Projesi (Room Project), rented a three-room flat in Galata, a historic urban district in Istanbul characterized by the mixed income levels of its residents, and the Istiklal, a well-known pedestrian stroll that runs through it. The area also serves as an entertainment district where many immigrants from Eastern Turkey gather when they first arrive in the city. *Apartment Project* was Oda Projesi's organic transformation of the private space into a multipurpose public one, where artists, architects, musicians, neighbors, and children would congregate informally to plan projects, hold get-togethers, and exist communally both within and outside of the context of art.

Each room was equipped and designed to encourage creative, communal interaction—for example, drawing materials for children, an archive of art books, and free meeting space. During the collective's five-year occupation of the apartment they hosted nearly thirty projects, including youth theater workshops, and picnics in the courtyard; exercises in building long-term relationships in the neighborhood, rather than making objects, hosting exhibitions, or marketing the production of art. Since its inception, Oda Projesi has been interested in what space can mean when it borders both public and private. To that end, the artists, who self-financed the space, never advertised their programs, or held "open hours." In 2005, they were evicted due to a rent increase.

Top to bottom: The architectural plan of the three-room flat in Galata, Istanbul, rented by Oda Projesi from 2000–2005 for the *Apartment Project*. The space was host to nearly 30 projects between 2000 and 2005, including Erik Göngrich's *Picnic* in 2001. Artist Seçil Yersel installed *Swing* in the apartment from April 22 until May 19, 2000. (Courtesy Oda Projesi)

PARK FICTION AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY NETWORK HAMBURG

1994—



When developers bid on a prestigious riverbank property in St. Pauli, a poor neighborhood in Hamburg, Germany, residents faced losing the only land in the area available for public use. But instead of protesting, they began picnicking and pretending that the contested site would soon house a public park rather than a high-rise office building. The project—dubbed Park Fiction—was initiated by the local residents' association and

artist Christoph Schäfer, and emerged as a viable alternate to the city's plan, which favored commercial interests over the community's desire for recreational space.

The group rallied community residents to put the park to use for festivals, exhibitions, and talks—activities that demonstrated local culture and encouraged citizens to take control of the urban planning process themselves, rather than

Above: A "planning container" moved around the St. Pauli neighborhood of Hamburg collecting residents' wishes for the development of the area (Photograph by Sven Barske, Courtesy Park Fiction).



seek the city's permission first. Inspired by theorists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept, "the production of desires," Park Fiction coined the phrase "Desires will leave the house and take to the streets," to stress the residents' imaginative transformation of the area.

They built a mobile "planning container"—equipped with a telephone hotline, questionnaires, maps, and an instant camera—that became a tool enabling members of the community to travel throughout the neighborhood to solicit input. The container, as well as documentation of the efforts that took place inside of it, was exhibited at art events, including Documenta 11 in 2002. This strategy of accumulating cultural capital, then leveraging it to obtain government support in the form of funding from the city's Art in Public Space program, proved successful. In 2005, the city abandoned plans to sell the property. A few months later, residents installed the first of their enhancements to the park: fake, plastic palm trees and rolling AstroTurf.



Top to bottom: Nearly 1,000 spectators congregated at Park Fiction in July 2009 for a screening of *Empire St. Pauli*, a documentary about gentrification in the St. Pauli neighborhood of Hamburg (Photograph by Antje Mohr, Courtesy Park Fiction). In 2005, a dog park complete with a poodle-shaped boxtree was created in the park (Photograph by Hinrich Schulze, Courtesy Park Fiction).

PASE USTED

2008—

In 2010, Mexico celebrated the bicentennial of its independence movement, fostering a range of events and activities intended to, according to the country's bicentennial homepage, "revive the values and ideals that shaped the nation." In anticipation of the bicentennial events, nine young people—from a range of disciplines, committed to the sharing of ideas and creation of an open community—founded Pase Usted in 2008.

The Mexico City-based nonprofit group promotes civic change and development through conferences that emphasize open dialogue and community building. Bringing together experts in various fields—civic engineering, architecture, art, city planning, design—the platform is unified by a shared agenda to address the most pressing needs facing the city. While community outreach is essential to each project, Pase Usted often enlists specialists to offer solutions where other options fail. While their activities vary—ranging from workshops to salons to exhibitions to public interventions—Pase Usted operates as an open source network, providing individuals with the technological tools needed to promote their ideas.

On April 23, 2011, Pase Usted, represented by Jorge Munguia, participated in a "Conversation on Useful Art," in Corona, Queens, hosted by Cuban artist Tania Bruguera at the headquarters of her project, *Immigrant Movement International*. The event, which also included artists Rick Lowe, Mel Chin, and Not An Alternative, asked participants



Above: Mexican artist Raúl Cárdenas (Torolab) discusses health care issues at a Pase Usted event (Photograph by Ariette Armella).

to share their work in the field of so-called "Useful Art." Pase Usted presented their work in Mexico City, focusing on the project "Genera," for which they made a "call for entries" to anyone with ideas on how to better the quality of life in Mexico City. The ten-week program gives funding to ten selected projects as a way of giving individual people the resources to actualize their ideas.

PIRATBYRÅN (THE BUREAU OF PIRACY) THE PIRATE BAY

2003—



Launched in 2003 by the Swedish anti-copy-right organization Piratbyrå, *Pirate Bay* is a large bittorrent tracking website that has reshaped the technical and legal parameters around file sharing. Key to this shift is a technology called "peer-to-peer," which deviates from standard downloading protocol. Traditional downloads transfer files from a single server. However, in "peer-to-peer" transfers, no centralized server exists; rather, file transfers occur between multiple clients, who send and receive only segments of files. *Pirate Bay* tracks files called "torrents" that in conjunction with "torrent" programs, can find users who share a given file. In doing so, file sharing can occur more quickly: Since multiple locations distribute the data, no single server can delay or interrupt file transfers. Likewise, since no single server can claim responsibility for the distribution of the file, copyright laws become harder to enforce. For example, record labels, film production companies, and software producers are less likely to sue multiple individuals for sharing files intended to be used only for personal use.

Above: Harvard education specialist Dr. Gabriel Cámara speaks to an engaged audience about the education revolution at a Pase Usted event (Photographs by Ariette Armella).

PLATFORMA 9.81

1999–

Platforma 9.81 is a Croatian group of architects, theorists, designers and urban planners. Founded in 1999 as an NGO, its aim has been to generate interdisciplinary debate on the culture of urban spaces, digitalization of the environment, effects of globalization, and shift in architectural practices. They have examined, for example, the layers in the urban fabric of Zagreb and its recent building projects, which reveal shifts in power structures induced by the transition from communism to capitalism.

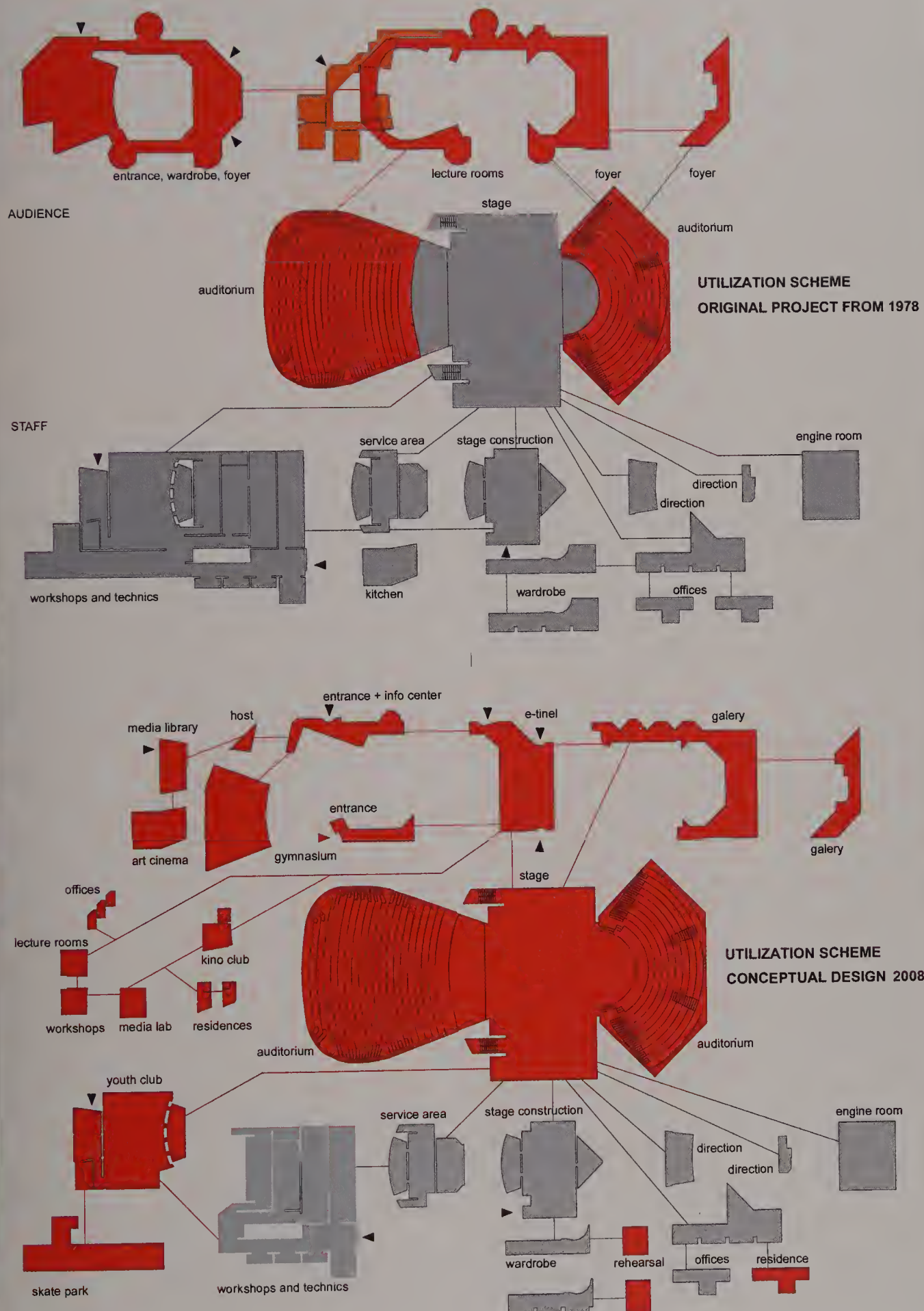
Part of the group has concentrated on the Croatian coast and islands. For the project *Tourist Transformation*, Platforma members Dinko Peračić and Miranda Veljačić researched the rapid changes marked by global capital and tourism during the past decade. Their work has been driven by an interest in transformations in the built environment, such as the differing expectations, desires, and experiences of residents versus tourists, or the seasonal fluctuations. To that end, their practice traces the precarious balance between the environment and its habitants. They consider what the landscape might look like tomorrow, and the potential cultural implications that occur when relatively untouched regions undergo development.

Peračić and Veljačić have previously worked in another island location, the Lofoten Islands in Northern Norway. Their *The Weather Project* focused on the weather's effects on residents and visitors. They collected proposals from the public

HYBRID INSTITUTION MULTIMEDIA COMPLEX

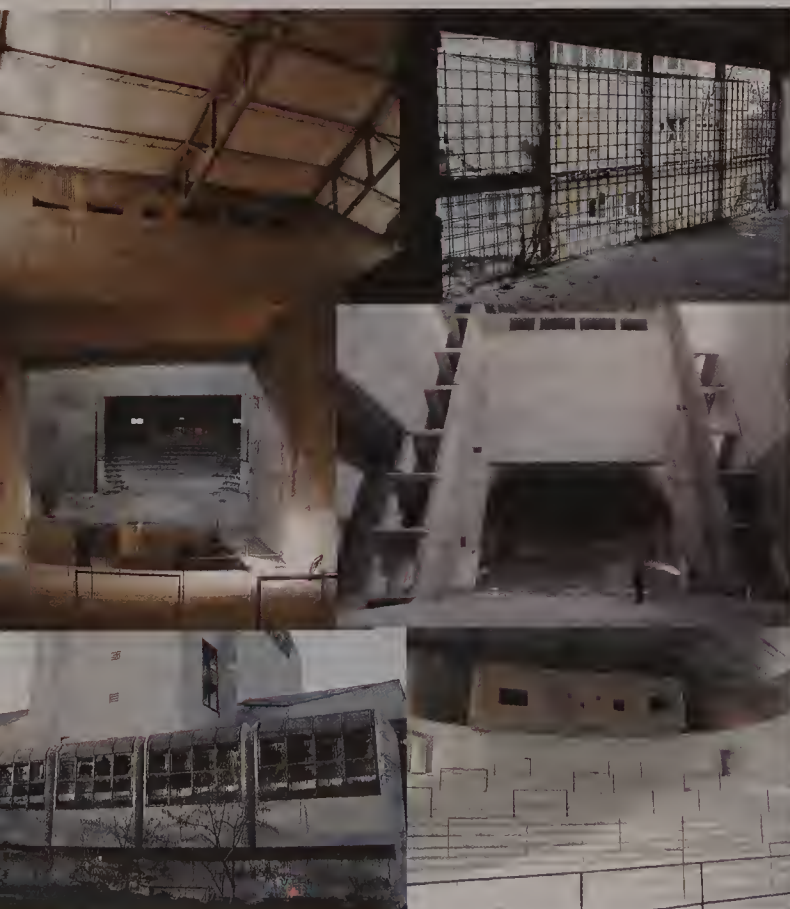


Top to bottom: For their *Invisible Zagreb* project, the group spent two years mapping abandoned spaces in Croatia's capital city (Courtesy Platforma 9.81). Platforma 9.81 has hosted a variety of activities since its inception in 1999 (Photographs by Josip Ostojić and Dinko Peračić).



Above: Technical drawings showing a Croatian building's original utilization scheme from 1978 (top) and Platform 9.81's 2008 scheme illustrating proposed utilization (bottom). (Courtesy Platforma 9.81)

for ways of communicating and sharing these experiences, such as the building of a lighthouse or creation of a line of pocket-sized souvenirs.



Above, top to bottom: Platforma 9.81 ran a graffiti contest for artists to decorate the outside of the building (Courtesy Platforma 9.81). Images of Croatian buildings whose use has been examined and debated by Platforma 9.81. (Photographs by Sandro Lendler and Dinko Peračić)

PUBLIC MOVEMENT FIRST OF MAY RIOTS

2010

The recurring May Day demonstrations in West Berlin's working class Kreuzberg neighborhood first turned violent as a way to challenge the city's efforts to silence labor protests during the late 1980s. However, the riots have now become less provocative, drawing audiences, as well as anti-capitalist protesters, from far-reaching locales across Europe.

Last year, Israeli artists Dana Yahalomi and Omer Krieger, who work together under the name Public Movement, marked May 1 by creating five radio channels of commentary and music as a soundtrack for the riots, and loaning visitors free mobile headsets during the event. Listeners could choose among the following tracks: two sociologists discussing the demonstration while observing it; a live musical performance; a pre-recorded talk by a philosopher; archival material from a past May 1 riot; and a DJ playing dance music. The project, which was commissioned by Berlin's Hebbel-Am-Ufer theater, allowed participants to consider the staged protest as a kind of performance, and to examine its position within the history of leftwing resistance to the state in this region. In doing so, Public Movement reframes the protest as a demonstration about demonstrations, rather than a reaction against specific issues.

Yahalomi and Kreiger stage performances in public space that test the possibilities for collective political action. Since 2006, the artists have organized what they call "manifestations of presence, fictional acts of hatred, new folk dances, synchronized procedures of movement, spectacles, marches, and re-enactments of specific moments in the lives of individuals, communities, social institutions, peoples, states, and of humanity."

PUBLIC MOVEMENT

PERFORMING POLITICS
FOR GERMANY.



Above, clockwise from top left: Public Movement is a performative research body that investigates and stages political actions in public spaces. Members of Public Movement take part in the performance *Also Thus!*. (Courtesy Public Movement)

PULSKA GRUPA KATARINA

2009

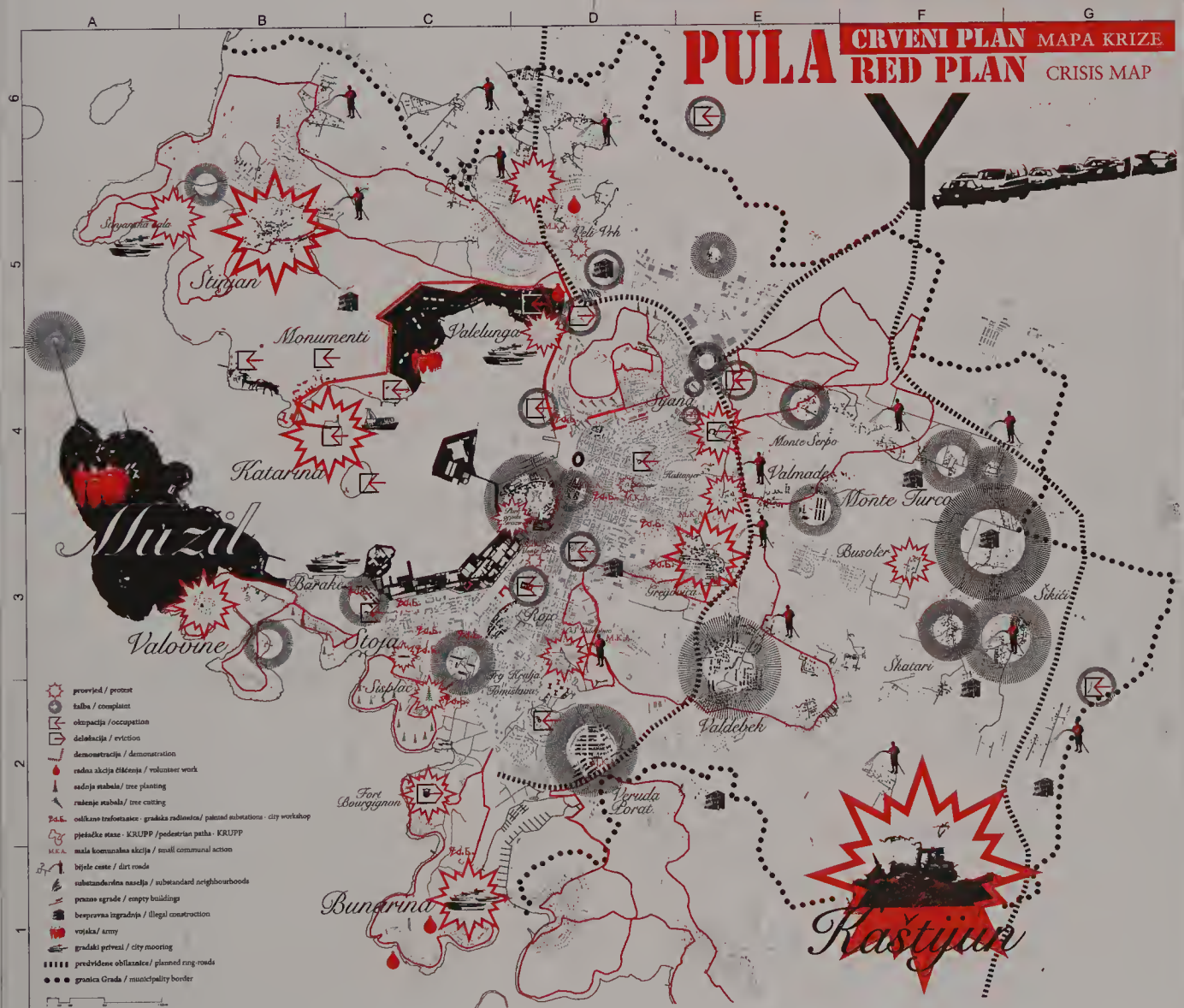


Pulska Grupa is a group of architects and urban planners based in Pula, Croatia, who focus on reclamation of public land, and “self-organized urbanism” in Pula and along the Adriatic coastline. After the end of World War II, the Katarina-Monumenti region of Pula—a restricted military zone—became the private residence of former Yugoslavian Communist leader, Josip Broz Tito. After one hundred years of occupation, the area was recently demilitarized and opened for potential new uses. Pulska Grupa organized student workshops to generate ideas for public use and to discuss ways to integrate the military infrastruc-

ture into civilian space. Workshops took place in renovated former barracks. Proposals included galleries and art studios, as well as a university center, post offices, and restaurants. A map of the area—imagined as a park—was produced to introduce the local population to the city’s expanded space. More recently, Pulska Grupa initiated cultural programming in the Monumenti infrastructure, such as music festivals, in order to generate awareness of the debate over the compound, and to garner support of their plans to implement non-privatized plans for its future. The group’s eight members, Ivana Debeljuh, Vjekoslav Gašparović,

Above: When a formerly restricted military zone became open to the public in 2006, Pulska Grupa organized workshops to generate ideas for its use (Courtesy Pulska Grupa).

Emil Jurcan, Jerolim Mladinov, Marko Perčić, Sara Perović, Helena Sterpin and Edna Strenja, actively challenge municipal and state plans for Katarina by producing publications, demonstrations, and exhibitions. "We imagine the city as a collective space which belongs to all those who live in it," they write in the group's manifesto, "They have the right to experience the conditions for their political, social, economic and ecological fulfillment while assuming duties of solidarity."



Top to bottom: Pulska Grupa hosted the Post-capitalist City Conference in 2009 (Photograph by Dejan Štufani). A map of the area was produced by Pulska Grupa to introduce the local population to Pula's expanded space (Courtesy Pulska Grupa).

PEDRO REYES

PALAS POR PISTOLAS (PISTOLS INTO SPADES)

2008

In 2008, artist Pedro Reyes collected 1,527 firearms from residents of Culiacán, a western Mexican city known for drug trafficking and a high rate of fatal gunfire. Almost every resident knows someone who has been killed in a drug war. The weapons were steamrolled into a mass of flattened metal on a military base, melted at a foundry, then recast as shovels, which were used to plant trees on public school grounds. Reyes solicited gun donations by broadcasting announcements on a local television station, and, in exchange, offered vouchers for discounted electronics and

appliances that could be redeemed in domestic shops. From the metal, Reyes created 1,527 shovels, and planted 1,527 trees across the city. Called *Palas Por Pistolas*, the project was originally commissioned by the Botanical Garden in Culiacán. Since then, the shovels, which bear labels explaining the history of the material used to produce them, have been installed in numerous exhibitions, and continue to be used to plant trees in locales across the globe. "This ritual has a pedagogical purpose of showing how an agent of death can become an agent of life," Reyes has said.

Trained as an architect, Reyes is known for his architectural structures and his performance and video work from the early 2000s. Some of his public projects include the penetrable sculptures also known as *capulas* (2001 to 2009); and *Baby Marx*, a television show that started through his work with Japanese puppet makers and grew into a commercial TV series. Through his expanded notion of sculpture, he aims to create solutions to social problems by creating room for individual and collective agency in the process.



Above: Residents of Culiacán exchanged guns for vouchers that could be used to purchase domestic appliances and electronics (Courtesy Pedro Reyes and LABOR).

Opposite: During Reyes' campaign, 1,527 guns were collected from residents of Culiacán. Shovels molded from melted-down gun metal were ultimately used to plant trees in Culiacán (Courtesy Pedro Reyes and LABOR).



LAURIE JO REYNOLDS TAMMS YEAR TEN

2008—

Tamms C-MAX is a supermax prison in southern Illinois designed for the solitary confinement and sensory deprivation of men who have been violent or disruptive in other Illinois prisons. For at least 23 hours a day, men sit alone in seven-by-twelve-foot cells. Meals are delivered through a slot in the door. There are no phone calls, jobs, programming, or scheduled activities. Before seeing visitors, men are strip-searched and chained to concrete stools. When the prison opened in 1998, prisoners were told they would be there for one year, yet one-third were still there after a decade. In an international human rights framework,

indefinite long-term isolation is considered cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment.

The Tamms Poetry Committee was a group of artists who started a poetry exchange with men at Tamms to provide them with social contact, and spread awareness about the harm caused by solitary confinement. At the urging of the prisoners, the group began to implement what organizer and artist Laurie Jo Reynolds called "legislative art" in order to establish oversight and end the worst abuses at the supermax. Thus, the Tamms Year Ten campaign, which was launched at the ten-year anniversary of the opening of the prison. This volunteer, grassroots coalition of prisoners, former prisoners, families, friends, attorneys, artists, and concerned citizens organized hearings before the Illinois House Prison Reform Committee, introduced legislation, and held dozens of public events and demonstrations. Their work resulted in the creation of a promising Ten-Point Plan for reform, which has still not been fully implemented. Tamms Year Ten also supports cultural projects. Supermax Subscriptions allows people to order magazine subscriptions for men at Tamms. The new Photos for Prisoners project invites prisoners to request a picture of anything—real or imagined—and then finds an artist to fill the request.



Above: A Tamms Year Ten mud stencil designed by Matthias Tegan outside the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (Photograph by Sam Barnett).

ATHI-PATRA RUGA

MISS CONGO

2007



Johannesburg-based artist Athi-Patra Ruga has a habit of inserting himself into challenging situations. He once sat in the middle of a basketball court, mid-game, wearing Jane Fonda-era aerobics gear. He also teetered in stiletto heels and a black sheep costume atop a hill in Switzerland, while corralled in a pen with actual, white sheep. In each case, Ruga—whose work spans performance, video, and fashion—confronts prevailing racial, sexual and cultural stereotypes by creating characters that embody extreme manifestations of those same stereotypes.

In 2006, he conceived of *Miss Congo*, a character dressed in drag and born out of the racial and gender inequities the artist witnessed while in Senegal. “[Miss Congo] represented ideas of displacement, of not belonging,” he says. For one year, Ruga, in character as Miss Congo, traveled to public spaces and wove tapestries while passersby observed him. The character eventually became the subject of a three-channel video documentary, *Miss Congo*, in 2007. The film depicts three of Ruga’s performances—solemn and lonely, but with a distinct undercurrent of humor and sensuality—that were carried out in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. The artist stitches a tapestry while sitting or lying in anonymous locations on the outskirts of the city, performing a traditionally domestic task far outside the domestic sphere.

Ruga has called these performances “craft meditations”—interventions into public spaces that draw upon his practice of working with textiles and cross-dressing to express complex, layered notions of cultural and individual identity. The Miss Congo character also allows the artist to explore themes of place and belonging, exercising autonomy by choosing isolation and distance.

Above: Stills from the artist's three-channel video *Miss Congo* (2007) show him weaving and reworking found tapestry in various locations (Courtesy Whatiftheworld Gallery and Athi Patra Ruga).

THE SAN FRANCISCO CACOPHONY SOCIETY KILL YOUR TV

1994

Years before the television show *Jackass* entered the popular imagination, The San Francisco Cacophony Society began subverting mainstream behavior through public pranks: for example, passing pre-lit cigarettes to runners during a city marathon, and pretending to take a group shower in a hotel elevator. The twenty-five-year-old club has altered billboards, infiltrated city buses in clown costumes, and held formal dress parties in laundromats—all in the name of “apolitical, nonsensical non-conformity,” according to the group’s manifesto. On October 22, 1994, two Cacophonists, Kevin Evans and John Law, organized the event Kill Your TV, during which 500 fully-functioning televisions were smashed, burned, and dropped from a three-story rooftop.

The San Francisco Cacophony Society, which has often been described as a second-wave Dada movement, began as an offshoot of “The Suicide Club,” an underground event series launched in 1977 that aimed to get people to experience new things, generally in private. Cacophonists, on the other hand, perform in public, with chapters in numerous national cities, including Los Angeles, Ann Arbor, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Chicago. The original San Francisco branch of the Cacophony Society was involved early on in the annual Burning Man festival, and is credited with launching the first SantaCon—a non-religious “Santa Claus” convention for those who dress in holiday gear year-round. The group also served as inspiration for Chuck Palahniuk’s “Project Mayhem,” the fictional organization in his 1996 novel *Fight Club*.

SARAI AND ANKUR CYBERMOHALLA ENSEMBLE

2001–

Cybermohalla Ensemble is a collective of practitioners and writers that emerged from the project called Cybermohalla, a network of dispersed labs for experimentation and exploration among young people in different neighborhoods of the city. Cybermohalla was launched in 2001 by two Delhi-based think tanks, Ankur: Society for Alternatives in Education and Sarai-CSDS. Over the years, the collective has produced a very wide range of materials, practices, works and structures. Their work has circulated and been shown in online journals, radio broadcasts, publications, neighborhood gatherings, contemporary and new media art exhibitions. Cybermohalla Ensemble’s significant publications include *Bahurupiya Shehr* and *Trickster City*. Their forthcoming publication, in collaboration with Frankfurt-based architects Nikolaus Hirsch and Michel Muller, is a consolidation of the conversations, designs, and efforts over the last few years to carve out a language and a practice for imagining and animating structures of cultural spaces in contemporary cities. Cybermohalla Ensemble use verse to describe their project:

“To Stand Before Change”

At times lava, at times water, at times
petrol: it melts, it courses, it burns.
A shadow we chase because of our sense
of connectedness.
A cunning battle with the measure of
things.
A collision of forms of life.
Movement without a fixed shore.
That which does not bend according
to you.
It becomes your own, but you cannot own it.
That which relentlessly takes on different
masks.

CHRISTOPH SCHLINGENSIEF PLEASE LOVE AUSTRIA

2000

After the Austrian People's Party coalesced with the right-wing, anti-immigration Freedom Party of Austria, artist, filmmaker, and theater producer Christoph Schlingensiefel staged a performance/reality TV show that allowed the Austrian public to vote on the fate of asylum seekers. He corralled twelve participants in a shipping container placed next to the Vienna Opera House for one week, with webcams streaming footage to a website. Unlike Big Brother, in which participants vote their least favorite character out of the show, Austrians were voting the asylum seekers out of

the country; Austrian citizens were asked to vote two of the asylum seekers out of the country each day, either by phoning in or cast their ballot online. The remaining contestant would receive a cash prize and the possibility of Austrian citizenship through marriage.

As the performance began, Schlingensiefel unfurled a flag that read, "Foreigners Out" atop the container, along with a logo of Austria's best selling tabloid, *Kronenzeitung*; the flag referenced the familiar right-wing slogan of "Germany for Germans, Foreigners Out." In the end, left-wing groups who were protesting against the Freedom Party's Jurg Haider intervened in the performance, surrounding the containers and demanding that the asylum seekers be let free. They climbed on top of the, and trashed the "Foreigners Out" slogan, eventually evacuating the asylum seekers. In response to this disruption, Schlingensiefel raised another banner, an SS slogan that had been used by the Freedom Party, "Loyalty is Our Honour." While his work shocked people, the artist claimed that he was only repeating Haider's own slogans. Schlingensiefel died in 2010.



Above: A sign on the container declaring, "Foreigners Out" referenced the pervasive racism in Austria (Courtesy David Baltzer and Zenit).

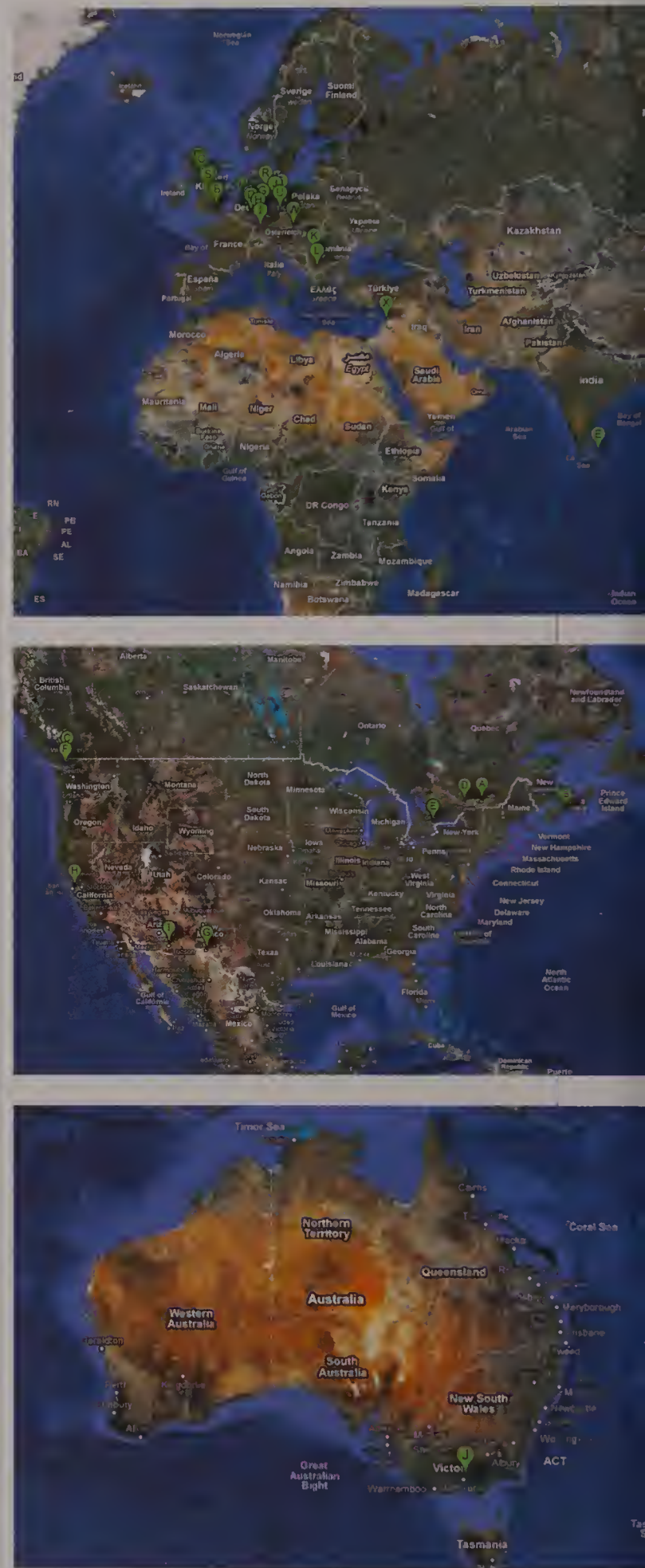
FLORIAN SCHNEIDER

KEIN MENSCH IST ILLEGAL (NO ONE IS ILLEGAL)

1997–

In German, the article “kein” roughly translates as none, or the negation of a preceding noun. “Kein” can also mean to withdraw or reject, as in a set of ideas. For media artist, filmmaker, and activist Florian Schneider, the word acts as a tool, for understanding how national borders are maintained in the digital era—and for contesting those borders: as citizenship status is increasingly monitored through databases and other digital information systems, protests against the civil rights abuses caused by such immigration controls are becoming equally ubiquitous. In response to these abuses, Schneider launched *Kein Mensch Ist Illegal*, or *No One Is Illegal* at the art fair Documenta X in Kassel, Germany. This conference brought together 30 international anti-racism groups, artists, and other activists, and marked the beginning of a loose, “borderless” network in support of reformed labor conditions for undocumented workers, as well as fair access to health-care, education, and housing. The network soon acquired a virtual presence, with international chapters organized via email and the Internet, still an emerging platform at the time.

Kein Mensch Ist Illegal served as the precursor to *kein.org*, Schneider’s ongoing, open source website that facilitates cross-cultural, -disciplinary, and -geographic collaborations aimed at dismantling boundaries drawn along those same lines.



Above: Electronic maps depict locations of refugee rights advocacy groups that make up the international *No One Is Illegal* network (Courtesy Florian Schneider).

KATERINA ŠEDÁ

THERE IS NOTHING THERE

2003

One Saturday morning in 2003, the mayor of a small, Czechoslovakian village, Ponetovice, broadcast a message to all 350 residents: He asked them to go shopping—at the same time. For the rest of the day, the people continued to synchronize their routine according to a schedule that was posted on the village bulletin board. They simultaneously opened windows, swept porches, ate dumplings, met for beers, and finally all retired to bed at 10 pm. Though the regimen, created by artist Katerina Šedá, was strict, members of the community felt liberated by the shared activities, an experience many Europeans perhaps associated—somewhat nostalgically—with their lives before the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989.

Šedá, who lives and works in Brno, named the project after a common saying in Czech provinces: “There is nothing there.” “They feel that everything important happens in cities or somewhere beyond our borders,” Šedá has said. For one year, she conducted interviews, distributed surveys, and observed life in the village, which was once the site of major military battles in the 19th century, but was now largely disconnected from the socio-political fabric of Europe.

Šedá often asks her projects’ participants to recount personal information that she then represents in order to encourage new reflection on what their lives can mean. When the artist’s grandmother fell into a deep depression after her husband’s death, refusing to leave her armchair to perform even basic, hygienic tasks, Šedá encouraged the elderly woman to draw, from memory, every item sold in the hardware store where she worked as a bookkeeper for 30 years. The activity, which yielded hundreds of images, allowed Šedá’s grandmother to engage with the past, in order to re-enter her life in the present. Similarly, by performing their minute, daily tasks *en masse*, Ponetovice residents were empowered to reconsider the larger terms of their citizenship.



Above: Residents of the Czech village Ponetovice participate simultaneously in everyday actions as part of Šedá's 2003 performance (Courtesy the Essl Collection, Klosterneuburg/Vienna, Austria and the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw).

CHEMI ROSADO SEIJO

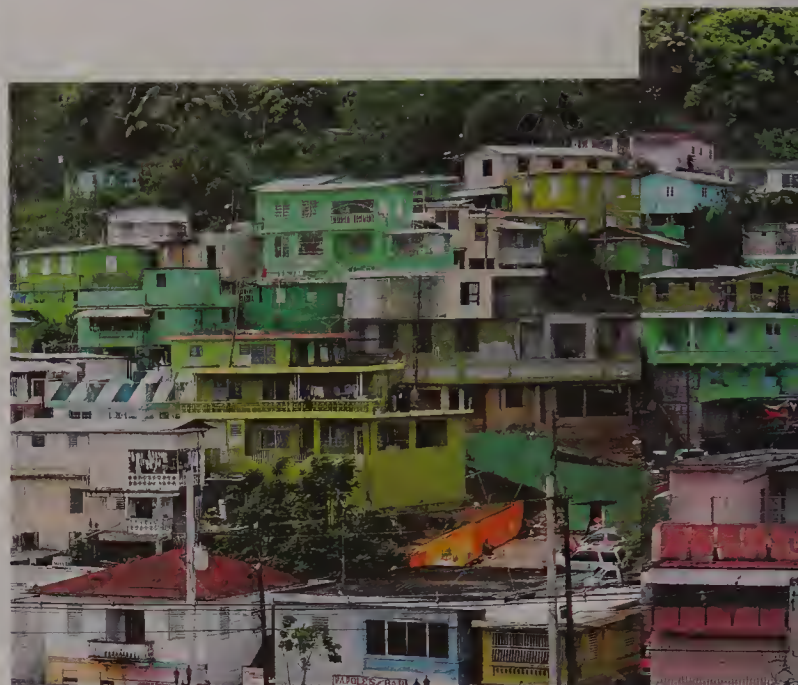
EL CERRO

2002

The houses of Naranjito, located outside of San Juan, Puerto Rico, follow the contour of the mountain beneath them, rising and falling along the ridges. This is the first thing Chemi Rosado Seijo noticed from the foot of the hillside; not the boarded windows or trash-lined streets—signs of a declining economy in what was once a thriving community founded by coffee-plantation workers. And so, in an effort to draw attention to the uniquely organic shape of this small town—and to instill a sense of civic pride among residents who were increasingly disillusioned with their economic situation—he began to paint all of Naranjito's houses green.

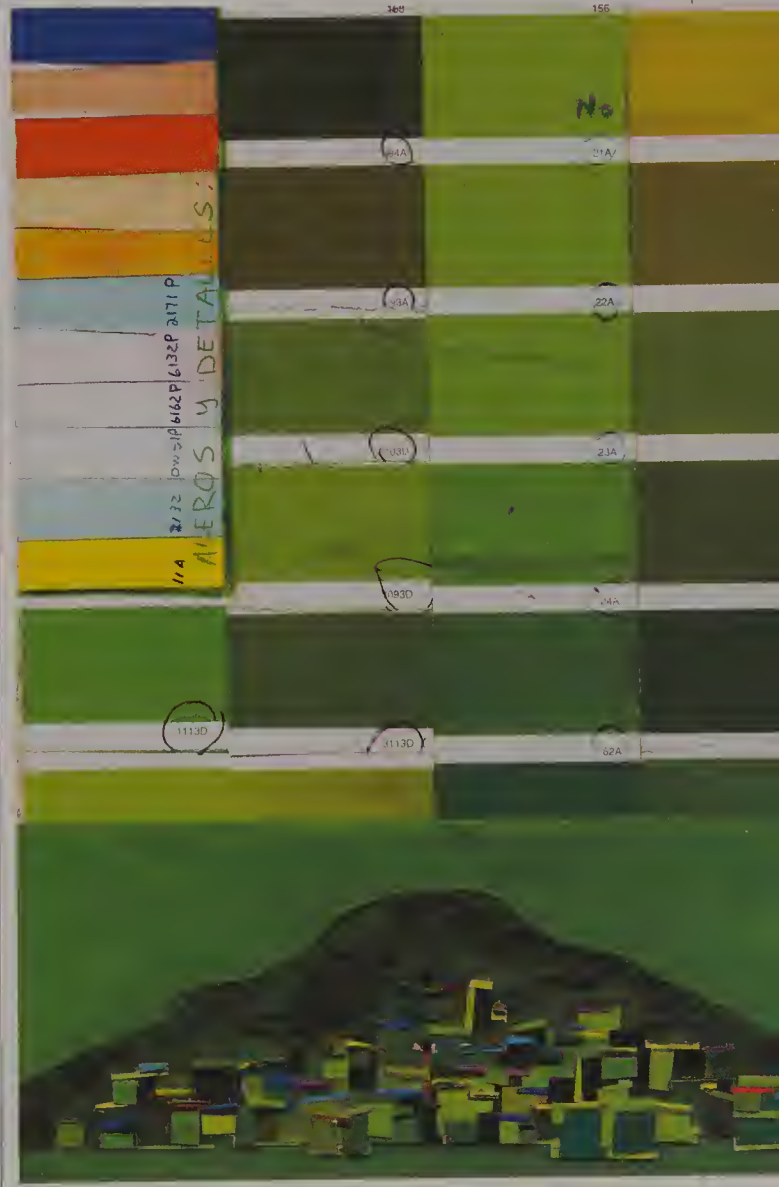
During the project, Rosado-Seijo asked homeowners for permission to paint their homes a shade of green of their choosing. Many declined at first, primarily because the color is associated with the *independistas*, a local group that sought secession from the United States. But gradually, as the color popped out of the terrain and complemented the hues of the surrounding trees, they began to agree on condition that he also repaint other parts of the property such as chimneys, stoops, and fences in different colors. He enlisted local youth to help him paint, and held workshops, conferences and other events that brought positive press coverage to a community inundated daily with reports of the endemic unemployment and crime that had overtaken the village.

Throughout his practice, Rosado Seijo transforms public perception by presenting new approaches to the urban experience. In 2005, he was commissioned by the New York-based organization Art in General to explore Manhattan on skateboard. He then created a map of the best skate sites and routes he located during his travels; his



15-foot diagram proposed an alternate transportation option as well as a new aesthetic understanding of the city. *El Cerro* was presented at the 2002 Whitney Biennial.

Above: Locals gather in a public park in Naranjito, previously known for its heavy crime (Photograph by Edwin Medina, Courtesy Chemi Room).



Clockwise from top: The painted houses in the Puerto Rican village of Naranjuto now echo the colors of the nearby mountainside. Swatches show the different shades of green that were used to paint structures. Visitors entering Naranjuto. (Photographs by Edwin Medina, Courtesy Chemi Room)

MICHIHIRO SHIMABUKU

MEMORY OF FUTURE

1996

Japanese artist Michihiro Shimabuku's 1996 installation *Memory of Future* took place in the car-oriented, decentralized city of Iwakura, Japan. Given the city's bustling layout, pedestrians are scarce and communal spaces are often under-used, even in commercial districts. Shimabuku filled an empty plaza with a variety of props, including a papier mâché bird's head, flowers, and a pineapple—intentionally incongruous objects meant to provoke passersby to stop, enter the space, and reflect on their relationship to the city. In drawing attention to previously ignored public land, Shimabuku asked Iwakura's citizens to consider new possibilities for activating it.

Shimabuku often tweaks routine experiences by performing absurdist acts in public passageways. For example, he shaved off an eyebrow in the London Underground, and then engaged in discussion with shocked and amused witnesses. He also carried an octopus down a Tokyo street, and afterward returned the animal to sea. In each instance, the strange act forced an often-oblivious public to re-connect with their familiar surroundings and participate in new exchanges.

In addition to engaging the public directly by creating interactive situations, Shimabuku's inventive, playful art practice often involves travel and transformation. He has made pickles while traveling by canal from London to Birmingham. He has also biked across specific regions in Japan looking for deer where none are known to exist—and, as with all of his projects, meeting passersby, making friends, and dispersing stories along the way.



Above, top and bottom: Shimabuku installed a handmade sculpture in an unused public plaza in Iwakura, Japan (Courtesy Shimabuku). Opposite: Residents of Iwakura engage with props included in Shimabuku's public installation (Courtesy Shimabuku).



BUSTER SIMPSON

BELLTOWN, P-PATCH, COTTAGE PARK, AND GROWING VINE STREET

1993—

“Get in early, make no assumptions, and treat your taxpayer as you would your patron.” So says artist and environmental activist Buster Simpson, who has been initiating community-based interventions in the Seattle neighborhood Belltown since 1993. The area is densely populated; over

the years, Simpson’s sculptures have operated as civic improvements, and functioning solutions to urban problems. Simpson’s sculptures can often be seen on the tops of buildings, integrated into downspouts, temporarily placed on street corners, protecting trees from cars, and in other locations.

His more extensive projects include P-Patch—a city-owned but community-run garden—occupying a spread of land next to Cottage Park, a development of three cottages used as a community center and a space for writers’ residencies. Projects developing the community space in Belltown address urban sustainability, pollution, and bio-filtration of urban runoff water.

In the mid-1990s, a diverse group of Belltown residents organized the Growing Vine Street project, turning the Vine Street area into a street park that cleans the environment while providing open space for the neighborhood. Over the years, the project has developed into a laboratory for green solutions designed as temporary prototypes for sustainable improvements.





Skyway Luggage Seed Bank

Situated on the roof of the old Skyway Luggage Manufacturing Building (about to be renovated as a dot-com complex), a volunteer landscape has been allowed to mature itself atop an old water tower platform. Soil from the volunteer landscape has been harvested and replanted in suitcase planters fixed to pallets. These portable landscapes will initiate an urban re-seeding strategy for future "green roof" landscapes. They could provide a tolerant and diverse seed bank for urban roof landscapes. Launch date: Spring 2001.

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Ben Marks dishes up another portion of root pie on Groundhog Day.

At the sign of the bell, they root for tradition

by Don Duncan
Times staff reporter

The Belltown Café's familiar bell-shaped copper sign, with the copper clapper, is hanging in front of the building again after a day in the oven.

Two years ago, the owners of the popular artists' hangout at 2208 First Ave. decided to take the sign down every year on Groundhog Day.

They would use it to cook up an enormous "root pie."

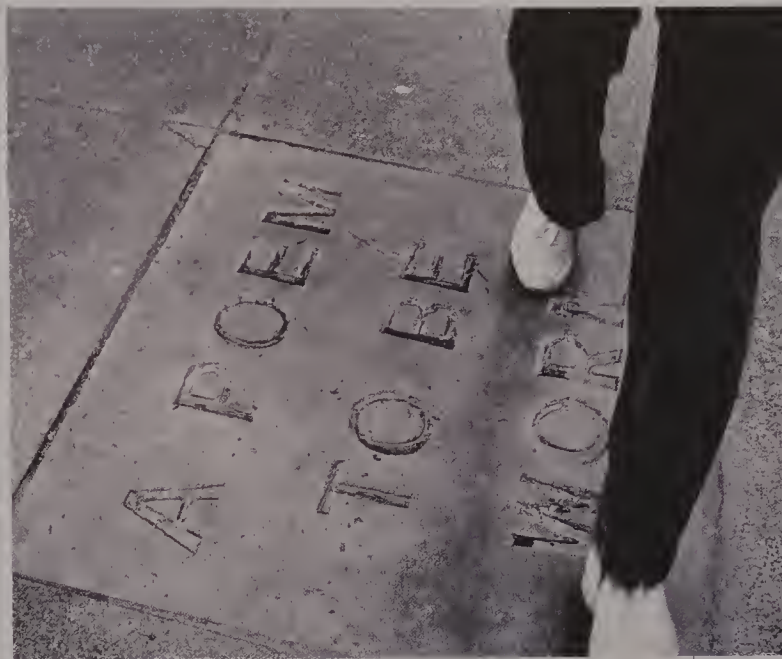
This year's pie contained onions, garlic, parsnips, carrots, rutabagas, celery root, sweet potatoes and white potatoes — "things that come out of the ground, the way groundhogs do," said Ben Marks, who owns the café along with Phil Oliver and Phil Viscusi.

Buster Simpson, who designed the sign, and Walter White, who constructed it, were among those who paid 75 cents for root pie, oyster stew and a bell-shaped chocolate cookie.

"We're really into helping local artists," said Marks, pointing out a variety of new works purchased this year.

"I just finished our income tax, and we spend a bigger percentage of our gross for art than the 1 percent that the city does," Marks added.

The copper bell survived the oven nicely. Patricia, who devoured about 40 pounds of root pie, did likewise.



Opposite: The Beckoning Cistern, part of the Growing Vine Street project, is a water cistern that receives roof runoff from the 81 Vine Street building. (Courtesy Buster Simpson). *Above:* Fabrication of the Belltown Pan, a bell-shaped pan created and used by the Belltown Café on Groundhog Day to cook a symbolic, communal dish (Courtesy Buster Simpson and the Seattle Times).

Clockwise from top left: A rooftop garden and seed bank was created using old suitcases from the Skyway Luggage Manufacturing company. A pedestrian walks across the hand-carved *Poem to Be Worn*, located in the First Avenue Urban Arboretum. In *Shared Clothesline*, Simpson installed nine clotheslines across an alley in the Pike Place Market District of Seattle as a simple gesture toward reconnecting the gentrifying neighborhood. (Courtesy Buster Simpson)

SLANGUAGE

2002—

The 1992 riots in Los Angeles left many lots in the city's center empty, and chain-linked off from public use. Yet, the chains themselves became canvases for public expression, when city residents started hanging signs for their businesses, and posting messages, on them. Years later, artists Juan Capistan and Mario Ybarra, Jr., considered these re-uses, and their history, when they began making art together, devising actions and music performances in the lots—"slanguage," as they coined it. The word, as well as their practice of collaborating, repurposing, and creating a new vocabulary around the urban environment, inspired them to launch Slanguage, a shared studio space and gallery in Wilmington, California, outside of Los Angeles, that took advantage of the lacunae that arose in the abandoned region. Since then, the collective, with Capistan, Ybarra, as well as artist Karla Diaz at the helm, has become a community resource for artists in Southern California that offers a residency program, workshops for teenagers, public events, and international exhibitions. The collective's work ranges from local poetry readings and summer art camps to major museum exhibitions and commissioned projects.

In line the with organization's origins, Slanguage members continue to explore the visual vernacular of street art, as well as its stereotypes, in their practice. For example, last year Capistan, Ybarra, and Diaz co-curated "Defiant Chronicles" at the Museum of Latin American Art, a group show that challenged graffiti as a male-dominated art form. More recently, Diaz organized "Laced Souls," an exhibition of artist-designed athletic shoes produced in collaboration with a local custom sneaker shop. The first "Slangfest," which took place in Long Beach this past summer, featured break-dancing lessons and recycled art



workshops presented by the group's teen council. Such endeavors combine Slanguage's mission of connecting street artists to contemporary art institutions and the general public to the history of art in the urban environment.

Top row: Slanguage is a Los Angeles-area artist group that hosts exhibitions, leads art-education workshops, and coordinates events (Courtesy Slanguage).

Bottom row, left to right: As part of the 2008 Whitney Biennial, teenagers were invited to work on a mural in Manhattan's Meatpacking District with Slanguage co-founders. As part of their three-month residency at MOCA Los Angeles in 2009, members of Slanguage presented a performance titled *Dislexicon* which included a headdress workshop. The Slanguage base is located in Wilmington, CA. (Courtesy Slanguage)



SUPERFLEX GUARANÁ POWER

2004

Guaraná is a berry grown in the Amazon that holds high concentrations of caffeine. In 2000, the main multinational companies that sell drinks produced from the berry merged to form a cartel. This created a monopoly on guaraná seeds, which drove prices down by 80 percent, jeopardizing the livelihood of Brazilian farmers who cultivate it. Beginning in 2004, SUPERFLEX worked with a farmers' cooperative to counter the local economic effects of the merger by creating an alternative product—called *Guaraná Power*—that would compete with the corporate brands.

The artists and farmers collaborated to develop the drink, determine ways to affordably produce it, and create marketing campaigns in the form of commercials featuring the farmers own

narratives about the project. In 2006, the *Guaraná Power* soft drink was banned from the 27th Sao Paulo Biennial by the president of the Biennial's foundation. In response, SUPERFLEX blacked out the label, and all references to the project in the exhibition materials. Since then, the project has also served as a reflection on copyright, trademark, intellectual property, and free speech. *Guaraná Power* has been exhibited in other exhibitions, in various forms, to bring attention to the Brazilian farmers' struggles and their attempt to find working solutions.

SUPERFLEX, founded in 1993 and based in Copenhagen, create projects that engage economic forces, explorations of the democratic production of materials, and self-organization. They describe their projects as tools for spectators to actively participate in the development of experimental models that alter the prevailing model of economic production. For *Living as Form*, SUPERFLEX was commissioned to create a life-sized, detailed, and functional copy of the JPMorgan Chase executives' restroom inside the Olympic Restaurant. The installation, open to the public, provided an essential service and also asked visitors to contemplate the structures of power that become imbued in even the most unassuming architectural spaces.



Above: *Guaraná Power* was bottled and sold at a production bar at the 2003 Venice Biennale (Photograph by SUPERFLEX).

Opposite: SUPERFLEX developed the drink *Guaraná Power* with local farmers in Maués, Brazil to compete with similar corporate products (Photograph by Jeppe Gudmundsen Holmgreen).



GUARANA POWER

Vi dyrker guaraná-bærrene i Amazonas. Du får energi.
Vi beholder overskuddet fra salget og bestemmer sel
overproduktionen. Og [redacted] får ingenting overhovedet.
Læs mere på www.thepowerfoundation.org

APOLONIJA ŠUŠTERŠIČ BONNEVOIE? JUICE BAR

1998

The art fair Manifesta 2 took place in the Centre de Production et de Création Artistique (CPCA)—a former fruit and vegetable warehouse in the Luxembourg neighborhood Bonnevoie that was converted into an exhibition venue. For her contribution to the show, the Ljubljana- and Amsterdam-based artist Apolonija Šušteršič built a juice bar outside of the building in homage to the history of the space, and to attract attention to historic architecture's new role as an experimental art center in the area. Her installation included a long, black counter covered in fruits, and a seating area, where visitors could congregate before entering, or after exiting, the exhibition. By placing the bar directly in the entryway, Šušteršič was able to draw both art patrons as well as neighborhood residents into the space—and into a dialogue—about its future in Bonnevoie. The project included video documentation that recounted the neighborhood's history.

With formal training as an architect, Šušteršič designs forums for conversation about urban infrastructure, and its effectiveness. For example, *Suggestion for a Day*, at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Sweden, offered museum visitors bike tours of contested architectural sites; an overview of the urban planning and policy debates those sites have sparked; and finally, an opportunity to discuss those issues with experts and municipal officials. In *Video Home Video Exchange* at the Kunstverein Muenster, Germany, she screened films that address the social function of suburban architecture (think: Ang Lee's *Ice Storm* and David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*). Then she asked viewers to produce their own videos about homes and gardens, and submit them for review, in exchange for a copy of a screened film.



Top to bottom: The Juice Bar was presented as part of Manifesta 2 in Luxembourg, and took place inside a former fruit market. In order to entice a local audience, the Juice Bar was open to the street. (Photographs by Apolonija Šušteršič)



Top to bottom: Still from a video titled *How to make your own juice?* which was shown at the exhibition space (Courtesy Apolonija Šušteršič). Šušteršič's Juice Bar acted as an in-between zone for the community to explore the contemporary art exhibition that was taking place inside the building (Photograph by Roman Mensing).

TAHRIR SQUARE CAIRO, EGYPT

2011

For one month in January 2011, Cairo, Egypt, reverberated as thousands of citizens flooded Tahrir Square in mass protest of former president Hosni Mubarak's 30-year-rule, which was marked by human rights abuses, corruption, economic depression, and food shortages across the region. The protests transpired for a mere 18 days, yet the during that time the energy of the crowd, which

consisted of student coalitions, Islamic women and labor groups, as well as other historically underrepresented constituents, escalated, due in part to the sheer number of people in the Square, as well as the new media-savvy tactics they used.

Since then, the so-called "Arab Spring" has been celebrated as a political and social media revolution, with Tweets, YouTube videos, and Facebook pages garnering as much attention as the vast on-site demonstrations. While the actual impact of this technology is still up for debate, these websites were inarguably an important communication tool for protest organizers, and Egyptian media outlets, who labored to disseminate images of the protests, and the ensuing crackdown, to the broader public imagination. Likewise, the active commemoration of the event—the production of poetry, T-shirts, and slogans—was reflective of the new communication channels. In February, Mubarak lost the support of his military, the international community, and the United States, and was forced to step down.





TALLER POPULAR DE SERIGRAFIA (POPULAR SILKSCREEN WORKSHOP)

2002–2007

Taller Popular de Serigrafia, or *Popular Silkscreen Workshop*, was a collective of artists and designers that formed during the protests following Argentina's 2001 economic collapse. Drawing on Latin America's long history of weaving political activism and graphic arts, the group

used silk-screen printing, a quick, inexpensive process, to create materials inspired by, and as instruments for, political events. *Taller Popular's* members would stand amid mobs of demonstrators pulling ink across screens to print images on t-shirts, and create posters and leaflets, to be used on site during protests, and as advertisements in train stations and other public corridors.

In 2004, the group silk-screened tank tops in collaboration with the sewing workshop La Juanita, a fair labor project by Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados de La Matanza (Matanza Neighborhood Unemployed Workers' Movement). *Taller Popular's* designs, often monochromatic, iconic images appropriated from sports marketing and political propaganda, have been exhibited in international art exhibitions, including the Brussels Biennial and the 27th São Paulo Biennial.

Opposite: Egyptian protestors focused on political issues, and demanded the overthrow of President Mubarak (Photograph by Pedro Ugarte, Courtesy of AFP and Getty Images). *Above:* Demonstrations in Tahrir Square began in January 2011 (Photograph by Mahmud Hams, Courtesy of AFP and Getty Images).

TEMPORARY SERVICES PRISONERS' INVENTIONS

2001–

Prisoners' Inventions was a collaboration between art collective Temporary Services and Angelo, an incarcerated artist in California, who illustrated the inventions of fellow prisoners that were designed to fill needs often repressed by the restrictive environment of the prison. The inventions range from homemade sex dolls and condoms to battery cigarette lighters and contraband radios. Angelo created drawings, recreated inventions, and worked with Temporary Services to build a life-size replica of his cell that would give visitors a sense of where the inventions were designed and produced. His work has been pub-

lished in a book, installed in exhibitions, and represented in other ongoing iterations of the project.

"If some of what's presented here seems unimpressive, keep in mind that deprivation is a way of life in prison," Angelo has written. "Even the simplest of innovations presents unusual challenges, not just to make an object but in some instances to create the tools to make it and find the materials to make it from."

Temporary Services is an art collective including Brett Bloom, Salem Collo-Julin, and Marc Fischer. They produce exhibitions, publications, events, and projects that explore the social context and the potential of creative work as a service provided to communities. The group started as an experimental exhibition space in a working class neighborhood of Chicago and went on to produce projects including *Prisoners' Inventions* and the nationally-distributed newspaper *Art Work: A National Conversation About Art, Labor, and Economics*.

To investigate the intersection of art, labor, economics, and the production of social experiences, Temporary Services invited over forty organizations and businesses from the Lower East Side to operate stalls in a section of the historic Essex Street Market during *Living as Form. MARKET* returns the space to its original function as a marketplace, but one that is free to use, non-competitive, and particularly diverse in its offerings.



Above: One of artist and prisoner Angelo's inventions, a battery cigarette lighter (Courtesy Temporary Services).

TOROLAB SURVIVAL UNITS/ TRANSBORDER TROUSERS

2004–2005

In *The Region of the Transborder Trousers* (La región de los pantalones transfronterizos), Torolab, a Tijuana-based collective of architects, artists, designers, and musicians, use GPS transmitters to explore daily life in the border cities Tijuana and San Diego. For five days, the collective carried GPS transmitters, wore Torolab-designed garments including a skirt, a vest, two pairs of pants, and sleeves that could be worn with t-shirts, each with a hidden pocket for a Mexican passport. They also kept records of their cars' fuel consumption. The GPS and fuel data was then fed into a computer and visualized (using software reprogrammed by Torolab) as an animated map. Each tracked Torolab member appeared as a colored dot on an urban grid surrounded by a circle whose diameter indicated the amount of fuel left in his or her tank.

Torolab has also produced the Transborder pant, wide-legged, denim trousers that serve as part of a Survival Suit for border crossing. The pants are designed with a series of flat, interior pockets to protect important documents from the trials of a long journey through rough terrain. One pocket is intended specifically to hold a Mexican passport; another accommodates a laser-read visa card. However, the pants are not intended exclusively for use by Mexican immigrants. For Americans, who often don't need to show any form of identification to cross the border, the pockets can be used for money, credit cards and pharmaceuticals purchased cheaply south of the border.

Torolab was founded by Raúl Cárdenas Osuna in 1995 as a "socially engaged workshop

committed to examining and elevating the quality of life for residents of Tijuana and the trans-border region through a culture of ideologically advanced design."

MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES THE BEGINNING OF MY ARCHIVE

1976–

"The sourball of every revolution: *After* the revolution, who's going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?" Over forty years ago, Mierle Laderman Ukeles wrote these lines in her *Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969!*, a treatise on work, service, home, life, and art that called upon service workers, of all kinds, to change the world through routine maintenance and preservation, rather than commercial development. Eight years later, Ukeles was appointed the first artist-in-residence with the New York City Department of Sanitation, a position she still holds and uses to explore the social and ecological implications of waste management. Her work has largely been exercises in outreach—sometimes literally: In 1977, Ukeles began interviewing New York City sanitation workers for her *Touch Sanitation Performance*. This multivalenced work included *Handshake and Thanking Ritual*, in which the artist shook hands and personally thanked each of the city's 8,500 sanitation workers over an eleven-month period, and *Follow in Your Footsteps*, where Ukeles, working eight- to sixteen-hour shifts, followed sanitation workers on their routes

in every district throughout the city and mirrored their motions as a street dance. In 1985, she built *Flow City*, a visitor center at the 59th Street Marine Transfer Station where the public could view used and recyclable materials as they moved through the sanitation system. Most recently, she has launched plans to reclaim the Fresh Kills Landfill, a 2,200-acre landfill on Staten Island that houses the World Trade Center debris that accumulated after the buildings' destruction.

Ukeles' projects mark her longstanding belief that "art should impinge on the daily life of everyone and should be injected into daily prime-time work-time." *The Beginning of my Archive* tracks another characteristic of Ukeles' practice—her detailed correspondence with workers, bureaucrats, and other stakeholders, as well as her own articulation of her so-called "Maintenance Art."



Top and bottom: For *Touch Sanitation*, Ukeles shook hands with 8,500 NYC Sanitation workers (Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York).

ULTRA-RED WAR ON THE POOR

2007

"What is the sound of the war on the poor?" In 2007, the self-described militant sound collective Ultra-red asked fifteen international artists and activists to record a one-minute audio piece in response to this question, which they compiled for the first volume of an ongoing series. The results ranged from field recordings, re-appropriated sounds, mini-symphonies, and spoken rants—both literal and abstract. For example, a reading of words taken from prisoners' intake cards at a Philadelphia penitentiary; sounds captured when squatters took over the offices of a fruit and vegetable factory; a silent hiss.

Ultra-red was founded by two AIDS activists, Marco Larsen and Dont Rhine, who first collaborated to counter police harassment during Los Angeles' inaugural syringe exchange program. Realizing that video documentation would deter users from participating in the exchange, Larsen and Rhine began recording sounds as a way of monitoring law enforcement, a practice the blossomed into a series of installations and performances. Since then, Ultra-red has expanded into an international group that explores acoustic space, social relations, and political struggle through so-called "Militant Sound Investigations," as well as radio broadcasts, texts, and actions in public space.



Above and right: Sound interventions produced by Ultra-red included artists' responses to the question, "What is the sound of the war on the poor?" (Courtesy Ultra-red).

**UNITED INDIAN
HEALTH SERVICES**
POTAWOT HEALTH
VILLAGE

1994—

"Good health goes beyond the individual. It must include the health of the entire community including its culture, language, art and traditions, as well as the environment in which it exists." These are the words of Jerry Simone, chief executive officer of United Indian Health Services, a 50-year-old healthcare organization that emphasizes the role of art, and sustainable practices, alongside allopathic medicine in its facilities. In 1994, the UIHS broke ground for Potawot Health Village in northern California, now a 40-acre farm with an outpatient medical clinic, community food garden, orchard, children's camp, and a wildlife reserve.

The wildlife reserve, called Ku'wah-dah-wilth ("Comes back to life" in the native Wiyot language), spans twenty acres of restored wetlands devoted to preservation of natural habitats, parks, and traditional agricultural and spiritual programs. Produce from the garden is distributed through a bi-weekly produce stand or a subscription member service between June and December. Another two acres are dedicated for growing medicinal herbs. And an additional one-acre garden, the Ish-took Basket and Textile Demonstration Garden, provides a workspace for traditional basketry as well as information on the negative effects of pesticides and chemicals on weavers and gatherers of fibrous plants.

URBAN BUSH WOMEN
SUMMER LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE

1997—

The Summer Leadership Institute is the feminist dance troupe Urban Bush Women's ten-day intensive training program that melds the performing arts with community activism in movement classes, workshops, field trips, community renewal events, and the development of new choreographies. Each day begins with a dance class followed by discussions groups on topics such as "undoing racism," and understanding cultural difference through storytelling. The Institute, which began in Tallahassee, now takes place in New Orleans to mobilize city performers in the ongoing recovery of Hurricane Katrina.

Choreographer and founding artistic director Jawole Willa Jo Zollar formed the seven-woman ensemble in 1984 to develop a "woman-centric perspective" on social justice issues. The troupe takes inspiration from both contemporary dance practice and traditions from the African Diaspora; often, Urban Bush Women performances consist of bold, powerful movements and intimate, narrative gestures—a vocabulary that offers alternate notions of femininity, politics, and personal history. The troupe has also collaborated with numerous artists working in a range disciplines from jazz musicians, poets, and visual artists.

This year, the troupe produced "Resistance and Power," a series of works that typify the approach of Urban Bush Women to exploring history: Though the choreography is rarely literal, the messages—stories that take on issues surrounding race, inequity, and the process of empowerment—are clear. "The arts are very powerful in addressing social change, and it's not where people often look first," Zollar has said. "But the arts connect people not to how they think about social issues, but to how they feel about them. Once you're clear about how you feel, then action becomes more of a possibility."

US SOCIAL FORUM

2007—



The U.S. Social Forum gathers tens of thousands of activists over several days with the goal of building a unified, national social justice movement across the country. Since its inception, two forums have taken place, in Atlanta in 2007 and in Detroit in 2010. Each forum drew over 15,000 activists, and offered a multitude of programs, including workshops, arts and culture performances, activities for children and youth, direct actions, tours, and fundraising initiatives. The event has attracted organizers—a younger, ethnically diverse crowd from a range of fields—interested in developing new “solutions to economic and ecological crises.”

Inspired by the World Social Forum—which, starting in 2001 brought together international activists fighting against neoliberal globalization—the U.S. Social Forum began to take shape in 2005. The planning committee was formed by the group Grassroots Global Justice and was comprised of over forty-five organizations, including Amnesty International USA, the AFL-CIO, and the U.S. Human Rights Network. Despite the breadth of the event, and vast attendance, the USSF, has received little press coverage in the mainstream media.

Detroit was a particularly apt host city for the USSF because of its persistently declining economy, lack of jobs, and other inequitable conditions that have come into central focus in recent years. The tagline for the event, “Another U.S. Is Necessary,” marks the spirit of the USSF, and the desire to overhaul economic systems and government practices—also reflected in the recent “Occupy Wall Street” movement, as well as other protests cropping up in municipal plazas across the globe. Over 1,000 USSF workshops took place, which veered away from standard meeting formats toward more collaborative efforts.

Above: Urban Bush Women perform “Scales of Memory” at the Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2008 (Courtesy Urban Bush Women).

BIK VAN DER POL ABSOLUT STOCKHOLM: LABEL OR LIFE, CITY ON A PLATFORM?

2000–2001

Imaging walking into a museum gallery and seeing your favorite POANG chair from IKEA. Your BJURSTA table is there as well, and balanced on top of it is your AROD lamp. It's an entire room composed of IKEA products, laid out as it might be in your own home. But there's one critical distinction: the whole familiar living room set up is affixed directly to the museum wall. In 2001, Rotterdam-based Bik van der Pol—the collaborative practice of Liesbeth Bik and Jos Van der Pol—created a three dimensional, life-size billboard at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm,

Sweden. Mounting actual pieces of IKEA furniture within the outline of Absolut's iconic bottle shape, *Absolut Stockholm* constituted a cheeky mash-up of two global Swedish corporations.

Using the billboard as a springboard, Bik Van der Pol explored relations between ideas, ideals, propaganda, and personal investment in the past. To build on the themes of the project, the pair selected a number of public spaces in Stockholm that had played a significant role in Sweden's past and the development of the "Swedish model." These spaces were then host to public meetings, small events, and interventions intended to foster connections between residents and visitors. In particular, participants were asked to interrogate the idea of "publicness," and the meaning of public space in a city where public places often disappear in favor of pragmatic capitalist developments.

Since Bik and Van der Pol began working together in 1995, their installations, videos, and drawings have interrogated physical, and cultural, time and space. For example, in 2007, they designed a screening format and guidebook for the Istanbul Biennale's *Nightcomers* video program throughout the city that broadened public access to the "high culture" event, as opposed to the traditional design of an exclusive screening structure.



Above: *Absolut Stockholm* took place all over the city of Stockholm and is a search for the life 'behind the labels' (Photograph by JN van der Pol).



Above, top to bottom: *Absolut Stockholm* took place all over the city of Stockholm and is a search for the life 'behind the labels'. *Absolut Stockholm* combined a New York Absolut Vodka billboard with IKEA furniture. (Photographs by Jos van der Pol)



Above: Bik van der Pol installed *Absolut Stockholm*, a life-sized reproduction of a New York ad for Absolut Vodka, at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm (Photograph by JN van der Pol).

**WENDELIE VAN
OLDENBORGH**
MAURITS SCRIPT

2006

The renowned art institution the Mauritshuis, in The Hague, was once home to Johann Maurits van Nassau, the former governor of colonial North East Brazil (1637–44), who was considered to have exercised a more enlightened, tolerant rule than many other colonial governors. For the third part of

Dutch artist Wendelien van Oldenborgh's ongoing collaborative project, *A Certain Brazilianness*, she invited people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including second- and third-generation immigrants from the former colonies, to the Mauritshuis to read a scripted multiple-voice dialogue compiled from official and unofficial historical accounts of Maurits' governorship. Two participants read each character, while others, including audience members, engaged in discussion about the historical issues raised by the script relative to contemporary culture. The live, staged event was recorded as a 67-minute film, called *Maurits Script*.

Rotterdam-based van Oldenborgh employs diverse voices in her investigation of the public sphere. She often uses the format of an open film shoot, collaborating with participants in different scenarios, to co-produce a script and orient the work towards its final outcome, which can be film or other forms of projection.



Above: A performer recites from van Oldenborgh's script at Johan Maurits van Nassau's residence in The Hague (Photograph by Wendelien van Oldenborgh, Courtesy Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam).

EDUARDO VÁZQUEZ MARTÍN FARO DE ORIENTE 2000–

VOINA 2007–

FARO de Oriente, or East Lighthouse, is a government-funded cultural center, and arts and crafts school in Mexico City intended to serve areas of the city that lack access to cultural services. Founded by poet and educator Eduardo Vázquez Martín, the space is located in the city's Iztapalapa borough, one of most densely populated and underprivileged communities in Mexico. All classes and workshops offered at FARO are free, and range from theater and music to jump rope and fabric printing.

In 2000, architect Alberto Kalach discovered a 24,500 square meter abandoned building, and divided the space into galleries, workshops, a library, an outdoor forum, gardens, and parkland. Designed as both cultural resource and civic outreach, the school serves as a forum for community meetings, and a social service information hub. FARO, which also hosts a pirate radio and television station as well as a print magazine, was the first such community center to open in the city; three more have been erected since then. The three-building space also houses a library, computer lab, gym, childcare facility, welding room, and carpentry workshop.

Conceived as a cultural center and space for artistic production, FARO follows a pedagogical model that emphasizes dialogue and seeks to create a space for diverse expression. Through these services, the center fosters community development as well as the improved use of urban spaces and city infrastructure for culture and art.

Eduardo Vazquez Martin was born in Mexico City in 1962. He has been involved in a number of Mexico City's cultural projects and publications, and is currently the Director of the city's Museum of Natural History and Environmental Cultura (Museo de Historia Natural y de Cultura Ambiental).

For the past year, the irreverent Russian art collective Voina has been laying low, on the run from the police thanks to their incendiary street actions that have ranged from absurdist pranks that suggest institutional critique—throwing live cats at McDonald's cashiers—to illegal, overtly politicized acts—flipping over parked police cars. In 2008, on the eve of Dmitri Medvedev's election, Voina staged perhaps their most notorious performance, *Fuck for the heir Puppy Bear!*, a three-part action carried out over the course of two days for which five couples, including a pregnant woman, had public sex in Moscow's Timirayzev State Museum of Biology.

Two years later, on the anniversary of Che Guevara's birthday, members of the group painted a 65-meter-tall, 27-meter-wide phallus on a drawbridge in an action outside the Federal Security Service in Saint Petersburg. Two of the group's members, Oleg Vorotnikov and Leonid Nikolayev, have been arrested for "hooliganism motivated by hatred or hostility toward a social group." Though they have been released on bail, they artists face up to seven years in prison. Since its inception, membership in the collective has expanded, somewhat virally, to more than 200 participants.

Though the collective's actions often read like high-concept pranks, they're motivated by a serious desire to call out corruption and complacency in modern-day Russia. Speaking to the *New York Times* in January, 2011, about the drawbridge action, Voina member Alexey Pluster-Sarno said, "It is monumental, heroic, romantic, left-radical, an act of protest. I like it as a piece of work, not just because it is a penis."



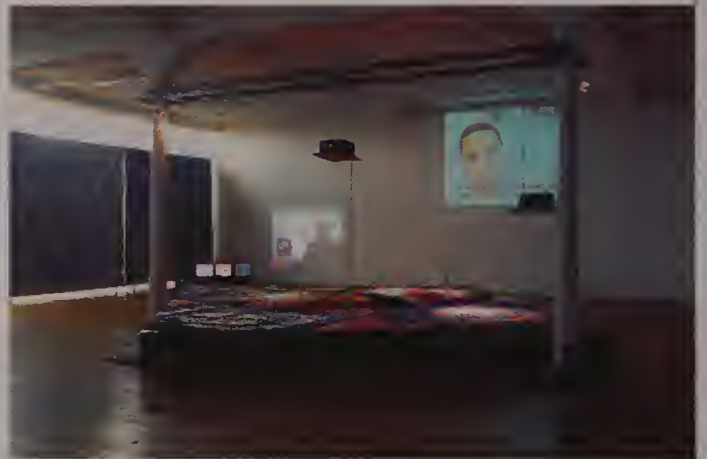
Top to bottom: Voina's action *Dick captured by KGB* was performed on June 14, 2010. In less than a minute, members of the group painted a 65-meter-tall, 27-meter-wide phallus on a drawbridge outside the Federal Security Service in Saint Petersburg. (Courtesy Voina, in partnership with the Brooklyn House of Kulture)

MARION VON OSTEN MONEYNATIONS

1998, 2000

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, new nations emerged. So did border policies that limited migration from Central and Southeastern Europe into the West, and labor practices that exploited workers and propagated new cultural stereotypes. MoneyNations—a network of artists, theorists, and media activists—formed in 1998 to create public discussion around the racist and discriminatory practices that developed across Europe in the decade after Communism fell. The group, which convened twice within a two-year period, also questioned outdated assumptions about difference, the “center,” and the “margin,” as well as left-wing criticism that often affirmed these ideas. “Even anti-racist campaigns tend to depict migrants as victims who have been criminalized for the purpose of achieving certain political goals,” wrote artist and key organizer Marion von Osten in “Euroland and the Economy of the Borderline,” an essay she published in 2000 describing the political climate that prompted MoneyNations to form. She creates collaborative forums—exhibitions, independently published books, and films—to challenge capitalism, sometimes by using capitalist practices to do so.

MoneyNations launched by inviting cultural producers from contested regions to develop communication platforms that didn’t simply include “non-Western voices” within Western institutions, but allowed those voices to lead the conversation. Their three-day event and media workshop at Zürich’s Shedhalle in 1998 yielded a webzine, video exchange, photographs, installations, and a print publication. Alternatives to top-down panel discussions, which often limit discourse to scripts, and stunt audience participation. In this arena, participants focused on the new collective and individual identities formed in post-1989 Europe by considering cultural produc-



tion and activism initiated by artists, over official legislative or economic policies.

The second MoneyNations event occurred in 2000 at Vienna’s Kunsthalle Exnergasse. This time, participants aimed to challenge existing power structures in Europe by experimenting with so-called grassroots broadcast media. The network launched mnFM, an on-air and online audio database and exchange platform, and MoneyNations TV, an open video-exchange between middle, central, and southeastern European producers.

Above: MoneyNations arranged collaborative forums (top), exhibitions, and events (middle) and invited cultural producers to launch communication platforms for non-Western voices (bottom). (Courtesy Marion von Osten)



Top to bottom: MoneyNations was organized by Marion von Osten to discuss the discrimination that developed across Europe after the fall of Communism. Exhibitions and events took place in Zürich and Vienna. (Courtesy Marion von Osten)

PETER WATKINS LA COMMUNE (PARIS, 1871)

1999

La Commune (Paris, 1871) is a 375-minute docudrama reconstructing the events of the Paris Commune in its 1871 struggle against the Versaillais French forces. The filming took place in an abandoned factory on the outskirts of Paris that was outfitted to resemble the 11th Arrondissement, one of the poorest working-class districts at the time of the Commune's suppression, and the scene of some of the conflict's bloodiest fighting.

The cast included 220 people from Paris and the provinces, most of them lacking prior acting experience. People with conservative political views were deliberately recruited to act in roles opposed to the Commune. The cast members were encouraged to do their own research into the historical events, as well as to improvise and to discuss the events during the filming process. Even after the shooting was over, the cast's involvement with its ideas continued in different ways; for example, a weekend of public talks organized by one of the actors, featuring presentations and debates on the Paris Commune.

English director Peter Watkins has been experimenting with the "newsreel style" seen in *La Commune* since the 1950s. He is particularly interested in the play between reality and artificiality that the medium of documentary film calls up—the "high-key" Hollywood lighting tempered by the emotions and faces of real people. Earlier films like *The Forgotten Faces* (1960), a recreation of the 1956 Hungarian uprising, and *The War*

Game (1965), for which Watkins used a Vietnam-era newsreel style to capture scenes from an 18th-century battle, point to the critique of modern media and community involvement evident in *La Commune*.

WIKILEAKS

2007–

In April 2010, a shocking video of an American helicopter firing upon a group of Iraqi journalists on the ground in Bagdad stunned mainstream media and the diplomatic world, and inspired a global debate about the relationship between news outlets and the governments they report on. The video, titled *Collateral Murder*, was released by WikiLeaks, a whistle-blowing non-profit organization that, since its inception, has aimed to shine light on the operations of governments and corporations around the world. Founded by former computer hacker Julian Assange, as well as a group of technologists, dissidents, and activists, WikiLeaks is guided by the premise that democracy works best when citizens are aware of state and military operations, and can hold governments accountable to their actions.

Historically, large media groups consult with government sources before releasing potentially sensitive information, in order to leverage these relationships for greater access to information. WikiLeaks has challenged this process by eschewing such negotiations and releasing classified memos, diplomatic cables, videos, and other materials directly to the public via its website. "Publishing improves transparency, and this transparency creates a better society for all people," states WikiLeaks' mission. "Better scrutiny

Opposite: Wikström repeated her original performance in 2009 at the ICA Maxi supermarket in Kalmar, Sweden (Photograph by Oscar Guermouche).

leads to reduced corruption and stronger democracies in all society's institutions, including government, corporations and other organizations. A healthy, vibrant, and inquisitive journalistic media plays a vital role in achieving these goals. We are part of that media." WikiLeaks' critics, with the U.S. government at the helm, have countered that the organization's practices have endangered military and intelligence personnel as well as their civilian sources.

WikiLeaks operates with a small, all-volunteer staff as well as a network of 800 to 1,000 experts who advise on issues such as encryption, vetting information, and programming. Its material is housed on servers around the globe, outside of the jurisdiction of any single institution or government.

ELIN WIKSTRÖM

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF EVERYBODY DID THIS?

1993

For her contribution to a group exhibition in Malmö, Sweden, Elin Wikström moved a bed into a grocery store, and lay silently under the covers every day, from morning until close, during the three-week run of the show. She installed an electronic display sign overhead that read, "One day, I woke up feeling sleepy, sluggish, and sour. I drew the bedcovers over my head because I didn't want to get up, look around or talk to anyone. Under the covers I said to myself, I'll lie like this, completely still, without saying a word, as long as I want. I'm





Above: Wikström lay on a bed in the middle of the store in Kalmar during business hours for seven days (Photograph by Oscar Guermouche).

not going to do anything, just close my eyes, and let the thoughts come and go. Now, what would happen if everyone did this?"

Wikström's presence drew mixed reactions from shoppers, as well as a range of discussions in the store—a place where otherwise nothing unpredictable happens, according to the artist. An elderly woman stood by the bed daily, and read passages from the Bible, while a young man pulled up a stool and read his poems to her. Another pinched Wikström's toe. "What is this? A real person or a mannequin?" he asked. "It's a work of art," his companion responded.

Within the art world, the acronym ICA generally refers to "Institute of Contemporary Art." In Sweden, the letters also represent the name of one of the largest supermarket chains. By hosting the exhibition in a grocery store, local artists were granted a new venue amid the closing of many of the city's exhibition spaces. Meanwhile, the show also brought performative works, such as Wikström's piece, to a wider public.

WOCHENKLAUSUR MEDICAL CARE FOR THE HOMELESS

1993—

Austrians are insured under their country's universal health coverage. Yet, the homeless often go without treatment due to a highly bureaucratic system that favors those with proof of residency. When the Vienna-based collective WochenKlausur was invited to present work at the contemporary art space Vienna Succession, they organized a free mobile clinic in the Karlsplatz, a plaza near the gallery generally populated by many homeless people. The clinic, which was run out of a van and equipped to facilitate basic medical treatment, was initially designed as a prototype intended to operate for 11 weeks. This was



Above: The clinic's van, now run by Caritas, travels to public spaces around Vienna and provides health care for homeless people (Courtesy WochenKlausur).

1993. The van still travels daily to public spaces throughout Vienna, providing medical care to over 600 people per month.

The collective—a group of eight artists—raised 70,000 Euros from commercial sponsors in order to purchase the van, medical equipment, supplies, and licensing required to operate the facility on public property. However, paying physicians' salaries proved to be a larger obstacle, since the only viable funding source—the city government—refused to participate. But after WochenKlausur enlisted a German reporter to interview Vienna's chancellor, the city acquiesced to the request, and continues to support two full-time positions.

Medical Care for the Homeless was the first of nearly 30 endeavors WochenKlausur has launched in the past 17 years, each designed to create immediate impact on a pressing local issue. The collective travels to different cities upon invitation by arts institutions, reads local papers, talks to residents, and then identifies precise actions that can be carried out within a given timeframe, in order to institute sustainable change. The projects have ranged from establishing a pension for sex workers in Zurich to recycling materials from museums into objects useful to homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and clothing distribution centers.

WOMEN ON WAVES

2001–

Women on Waves rocked the boat well before setting sail in 2001. Lead by physician Rebecca Gomperts, this women's healthcare advocacy group aimed to provide abortion services in countries where the procedure is illegal. They built a seafaring abortion clinic registered in The Netherlands,



Top: The Women on Waves ship Aurora prepares to sail to Ireland (Courtesy Women on Waves). Above: The first Latin American abortion hotline was officially launched in 2008 in Ecuador when a banner was hung on the Virgen del Panecillo in Quito (Photograph by Mrova, Courtesy Women on Waves).



anchored it 12 miles away from harbors in international waters, where they could operate under Dutch law, and attempted to safely bring women on board. Yet, media buzz resulted in strong resistance including military intervention as the ship approached Portugal and pelts from fake blood and eggs in Poland. No surgical abortions were performed at sea, and only fifty women received abortions of any kind on the vessel. "But the boat created a lot of controversy, which has always been important to the campaign," says Kinja Manders, project manager for Women on Waves. "Our goal has always been to stir public debate, and to send the message that abortion is not simply a public health issue—it's a social justice issue."

The small team, a mix of healthcare specialists and activists, provided contraceptives, pregnancy testing, information about STDs, and prescribed the abortion pill (RU-486) aboard until 2008. While the sea voyages have ended, Women on Waves has exhibited the boat in international exhibitions, in homage to the organization's roots in the arts: early funding was provided by the Mondriaan Foundation, and Gomperts earned a degree in art before attending med school. "We've always been interested in the link between activism and art," Manders says, "and in finding creative and conceptual solutions that are on the edge." The organization now exists online and educates women on safe, self-induced abortions, a medically uncontroversial, but politically charged practice; how to obtain abortion pills; and where to seek accurate information and counseling before and after an abortion.



Above. The Portuguese Navy blocks the Women on Waves ship from entering Portugal (Photograph by Nadya Peek, Courtesy Women on Waves).

THE LEONORE ANNENBERG PRIZE FOR ART AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Starting in 2008, Creative Time has had the honor of bestowing The Leonore Annenberg Prize for Art and Social Change to three distinguished artists who have committed their life's work to promoting social justice in surprising and profound ways. The \$25,000 prize is presented annually at the Creative Time Summit and has been generously supported by the Annenberg Foundation.

The prize is directly in line with the achievements of Mrs. Annenberg's generous spirit, passion for humanitarian efforts, and devotion to the public good. The award also furthers Creative Time's long commitment to commissioning and presenting groundbreaking, historically important artwork, and fostering a culture of experimentation and change.

THE YES MEN

2003—

Founded by self-described “impostors” Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno, The Yes Men work to raise awareness around pressing social issues, specifically targeting “leaders and big corporations who put profits ahead of everything else.” Known for their public pranks and parodies, the duo agree their way into the fortified compounds of commerce and politics and share their stories to provide the public with a glimpse at the inner workings of corporate and political America. An early project took the form of a satirical website, www.gwbush.com, which drew attention to alleged hypocrisies and false information on President G. W. Bush’s actual site. On December 3, 2004, the twentieth anniversary of Bhopal disaster in India, Bichlbaum posed as a spokesperson from Dow Chemical—the company responsible for the chemical disaster—for an interview with the BBC. Announcing on live television that the company intended to liquidate \$12 billion in assets to assist victims of the Bhopal incident, Bichlbaum

started an international rumor resulting in a loss of \$2 billion for Dow.

In their most notorious prank to date, The Yes Men, the 2009 recipients of The Leonore Annenberg Prize for Art and Social Change, designed and distributed fake editions of three world newspapers. On November 12, 2008, they distributed a fake edition of *The New York Times* in NYC and LA. The lead headline proclaimed, “Iraq War Ends.” Their fake edition of *The International Herald Tribune*, on which Greenpeace collaborated and which was distributed in Brussels, NYC, and Beijing, coincided with an international climate change summit in Brussels. It declared, “Heads of State Agree on Historic Climate-Saving Deal.” When the summit failed to produce a solid agreement, The Yes Men updated the online edition to read, “World Actually Not Saved.” On September 21, 2009, a bogus *New York Post* distributed in New York City read “We’re Screwed,” again commenting on worldwide climate change.

Over the years the group has also launched some very unconventional products—from the Dow Acceptable Risk calculator, a new industry standard for determining how many deaths are acceptable when achieving large profits, to Vivoleum, a new renewable fuel sourced from the victims of climate change. The gonzo political activists have produced two documentary films, *The Yes Men* (2003) and *The Yes Men Fix the World* (2009), which was awarded the prestigious audience award at the Berlin International Film Festival.





Opposite: A New Yorker takes in the shocking news from the Yes Men's faux New York Times cover (Courtesy Steve Lambert).

Above, top to bottom: The inflatable costume SurvivaBall claims to be a self contained living system for corporate managers for surviving disasters caused by global warming. The Yes Men pose as corporate executives. (Courtesy Steve Lambert)

RICK LOWE PROJECT ROW HOUSES

1993—

In 1993, artist Rick Lowe purchased a row of abandoned shotgun-style houses in Houston, Texas', Northern Third Ward district, a low-income African-American neighborhood that was slated for demolition. He galvanized hundreds of volunteers to help preserve the buildings, first by sweeping streets, rebuilding facades, and renovating the old housing's interiors. Then, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and private foundations, the growing group of activists transformed the blight-ridden strip into a vibrant campus that hosts visiting artists, galleries, a park, commercial spaces, gardens, and as well as subsidized housing for young mothers, ages 18-26, looking to get back on their feet. Called *Project Row Houses*, the effort has restored the architecture and history of the community, while

providing essential social services to residents. Now functioning as a non-profit organization, the project continues to be emblematic of long-term, community-engaged programs, and has been exhibited around in world in museums, and other art venues.

Since Project Row Houses' inception, Lowe—the 2010 recipient of The Leonore Annenberg Prize for Art and Social Change—has privileged art as a catalyst for change, a word that he has considered carefully. "It used to be that you could assume a progressive agenda when you heard the word 'change,'" he says. "But language is shifting. Clarify is missing." The project first took root after a conversation he had with a high school student who questioned the efficacy of making art objects in the quest for social justice. Inspired, Lowe looked to the work of artist John Biggers, who believed that art holds the capacity to uplift tangible social conditions, before intervening in the Northern Third Ward.

Project Row Houses has grown from 22 houses to 40, and includes exhibition spaces, a literary center, a multimedia performance art space, offices, low-income housing, and other amenities. In 2003, the organization established the Row House Community Development Corporation, a low-income rental-housing agency.





Opposite. The white clapboard duplex structures were built to provide housing for low-income families (Photograph by Eric Hester, courtesy Project Row Houses).

Clockwise from top: Lowe discovered this abandoned block and a half of row houses in Houston's Northern Third Ward in 1993. Visitors attend the opening of Project Row Houses Round 33 in October 2010. Artist Andrea Bowers contributed *Hope in Hindsight* as part of Round 33 at Project Row Houses. (Photographs by Eric Hester, courtesy Project Row Houses)

JEANNE VAN HEESWIJK

1993—

"If you really want to contribute to changes in social structures, you need time." Jeanne van Heeswijk took this ethos to heart in *Valley Vibes*, her effort to gather the voices of East London's residents, who in 1998 began witnessing gentrification—or the replacement of local culture for corporate business—in their neighborhood. As part of the project, van Heeswijk built a "Vibe Detector," a simple aluminum storage container on wheels that functions as a mobile karaoke machine, radio station, and recording studio, equipped with a professional sound kit and DAT recorder.

At the project's launch, van Heeswijk enlisted members of the architecture and urban-planning research group CHORA to occupy sidewalks (à la street food vendors) and ask residents to use the available equipment to record their stories, music, performances, or any other signifier of local culture that countered the regeneration taking place in the neighborhood. The Vibe Detector

traveled to private parties, the local hairdresser's salon, shops, nightclubs, poetry readings, school events, municipal meetings, and festivals—wherever residents would gather to discuss issues important to them. CHORA still operates the Vibe Detector by offering the equipment for use free of charge, as well as technical assistance and marketing advice.

Van Heeswijk is the 2011 recipient of The Leonore Annenberg Prize for Art and Social Change. Since 1993, she has created public art that mediates relationships among neighborhood residents by initiating different modes of communication around pressing issues. For one of her first projects, she organized a joint exhibition between Amsterdam's Buren van Berlage art museum and the Red Cross that addressed notions of human dignity in an age of violence. In 2008, she revitalized the Afrikaander market in South Rotterdam by bringing artists, vendors, and consumers together to rebuild stalls, rethink the selection of wares for sale, and create a new economy within this struggling neighborhood.



Above: Van Heeswijk created Norway's first hospital soap opera with *It Runs in the Neighbourhood* at the Stavanger University Hospital in 2008, when Stavanger was the European Capital of Culture (Photograph by Jeanne van Heeswijk).



Above: *Valley Vibes* took place in parts of East London designated for regeneration, like this section near Deptford (Courtesy of Jeanne van Heeswijk and Amy Plant).



Top row, left to right: *The Blue House*, one of the buildings in a planned development in Amsterdam, was turned into a place for research into the history, development, and evolution of experimental communities. *Tomorrows Market* is a project based on cultural production as a means of economic growth for the redeveloping Aankandervijk neighborhood of Rotterdam. (Photographs by Ramon Mosterd)

Bottom: Van Heeswijk, with architect Dennis Kaspori, offered children a collective learning environment with the project *Face Your World*, *Urban Lab Slotervaart* in Amsterdam in 2005 (Photograph by Dennis Kaspori).

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Figure 6. The effect of the number of iterations on the accuracy of the proposed algorithm. The results are shown for three different values of α : 0.01, 0.05, and 0.1. The x-axis represents the number of iterations from 0 to 100, and the y-axis represents the error rate from 0.0 to 0.8. In all cases, the error rate decreases as the number of iterations increases, with higher α values generally resulting in lower error rates.

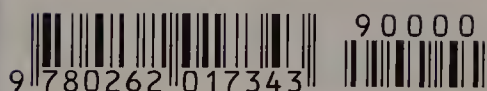
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